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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8395th meeting
Friday, 9 November 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu/Mr. Wu Haitao	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations

Letter dated 1 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/982)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations

Letter dated 1 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/982)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zambia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of Qatar, on behalf of the President of the General Assembly; Her Excellency Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council; and Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice.

Judge Yusuf is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from The Hague.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and Mr. Robert Mardini, Head of Delegation and Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/982, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank China for using its presidency of the Security Council to highlight the importance of strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations.

Today's discussion takes place just days before the one hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War. That conflict was a colossal tragedy and a frightening harbinger of bloody decades to follow.

Europe was multipolar at that time, but that was not enough to keep violence at bay. Without multilateral mechanisms for international problem-solving, war erupted and lasted for years. It took a second global cataclysm to trigger the multilateral arrangements we know today. They have a proven track record in saving lives, generating economic and social progress and avoiding a third descent into world war.

Recent years have seen inspiring achievements in international diplomacy, above all the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The peace operations authorized by the Council are also important expressions of multilateralism in action. Peacekeeping has helped a great many countries to recover from armed conflict. Our missions are often critical bulwarks against chaos and bloodshed. That is why I am so encouraged that 151 countries, along with 4 leading international and regional organizations, have expressed support for

the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which aims to strengthen these collective partnerships.

In other realms, however, multilateral efforts are under immense stress. This is a time of multiplying conflicts, advancing climate change, deepening inequality and rising tensions over trade. It is a period when people are moving across borders in unprecedented numbers in search of safety or opportunity. We are still wrestling with the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and only beginning to reckon with the potential dangers of new technologies. There is anxiety, uncertainty and unpredictability across the world. Trust is on the decline, within and among nations. People are losing faith in political establishments — national and global. Key assumptions have been upended, key endeavours undermined and key institutions undercut. It often seems that the more global the threat, the less able we are to cooperate. This is very dangerous in the face of today's challenges, for which global approaches are essential.

In this difficult context, we need to inspire a return to international cooperation. We need a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system. In the end, multilateralism is nothing more than countries coming together, respecting one another and establishing the forms of cooperation that guarantee peace and prosperity for all in a healthy planet. Towards that end, we need stronger commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre and with the different institutions and treaties that bring the Charter to life.

But it is not enough to have laws and international conventions, vital as they are. We need new forms of cooperation with other international and regional organizations — a networked multilateralism. And we need closer links with civil society and other stakeholders — an inclusive multilateralism. The Security Council has a central role to play in showing the value of international cooperation. Let us recall that Charter of the United Nations endows the Council with special stature, powers and responsibilities; and so this body also bears the burden of not just its own but the United Nations overall reputation. I think we can all agree that crises in Syria, in the Middle East peace process and elsewhere have shaken popular faith in the potential of the international community to deliver solutions.

I encourage the members of the Council to do more to overcome divisions, embrace the prevention and peacebuilding agendas, and make greater use of mediation and the other tools set out in Chapter VI of the Charter for the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. I remain convinced of the need for a surge in diplomacy, and I draw strength from recent examples of negotiated political solutions to problems that previously seemed hopeless. In the same spirit, I encourage all Member States to make greater investments in building a fair globalization that works for all, and in social cohesion that gives a stake in society to all, in line with the 2030 Agenda. There should be no room for demonizing minorities, migrants and refugees, or for stifling the diversity that enriches societies.

As we mark the centennial of the First World War, we must draw on its lessons and buttress our practice of multilateralism for the tests and threats of today and tomorrow. And as twenty-first-century challenges threaten to outpace twentieth-century institutions and mindsets, let us reaffirm the ideals of collective action while pursuing a new generation of approaches and architecture capable of responding. Reform of the United Nations has a crucial contribution to make, and I look forward to continuing to press ahead across the pillars of that effort.

But most of all, it is our resilient and still visionary Charter of the United Nations that points the way with its articulation of universal values, its grounding in peace, development, human rights and the rule of law, and its vision of countries living as good neighbours and sharing a common fate and future. Strengthening multilateralism means strengthening our commitment to the Charter. Such a commitment is needed now more than ever from all around this table and around our world.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Al-Thani.

Ms. Al-Thani: I shall now read out a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

> "Allow me to congratulate China on assuming the presidency of the Council. I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to speak and for organizing this very timely debate.

"The headwinds against multilateralism are present and clear. In a world of ever-increasing interdependence and a close interrelationship between human rights, development and peace and security, we have no choice but to collectively champion multilateralism.

"The conflicts in Yemen, Syria and other parts of the world, as well as the tensions that continue to simmer elsewhere, deprive the people of those countries of the fruits of sustainable development. But the rest of the world suffers alongside them because, as the Chinese proverb goes, a rising tide lifts all boats. We cannot achieve our ambitious transformative sustainable development goals as a world community when conflict and instability limit the potential gain from cooperation. Simply, we thrive as individual nations when all nations thrive. That is the evidence of history and that is the core value of our United Nations.

"The Security Council's own history and experience, both as witness and actor, shows that the enduring outcomes of conflict resolution require a multilateral approach. We must reinforce the multilateral mechanisms that have consistently allowed for frank dialogue, mutual support and joint action, convinced that a fragmented and go-it-alone approach to peace and security is not sustainable.

"As we prepare to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, a moment in our common historical memory of the carnage of war, we face a test of leadership. Are we committed, like the global leaders who fashioned our own United Nations system, to responding equally to the global challenges that threaten today's world? On this note, I should like to make three brief points.

"First, I note that advancing multilateralism is at the heart of my presidency. I remain deeply convinced that dialogue and international cooperation are the only tried and tested approaches to addressing global challenges and, by extension, to making the United Nations and other multilateral institutions relevant to the peoples of the world. That is particularly important around issues of peace and security, which more frequently now span borders and regions and cannot be addressed or contained by any single country alone. This sentiment was echoed by world leaders in the recent general debate of the General Assembly, at which multilateralism and commitment to international peace and security were among the most cited issues. I therefore call on all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the principles and pillars of the Charter of the United Nations, to strengthen the international legal order, and to maintain binding international cooperation.

"My second point refers to the need to empower women and youth in pursuing and sustaining peace. The commitment to the inclusion of women and youth — one of the key objectives of multilateralism — is critical both to the success of the peace and security agenda and to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our common interest in sustaining peace and responding effectively to global challenges means that we should promote international cooperation to address inequality, exclusion and alienation. We must therefore collectively work towards empowering women and youth, including through greater economic opportunities, decent work, political participation and social protection and in peace processes.

"My final point relates to the need for a greater, more coordinated approach within the United Nations system to address international peace and security issues. As mentioned, global challenges require global solutions. There is no body or entity more representative or emblematic of global cooperation and multilateralism than the United Nations. We must continue to foster mutually reinforcing and coordinated efforts among the main organs of the Organization to boost and uphold multilateralism. The General Assembly, the Security Council and other United Nations organs and entities all play crucial, complementary roles, within their respective mandates, in fostering international peace and security.

"As President of the General Assembly, I commit to facilitating greater synergy within the United Nations system, while taking advantage of the renewed interest in the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly and the reform process across the three main streams of development, peace and security and management. I am also continuing regular consultations and periodic exchanges of information with the Secretary-General, the President of the Economic and Social

Council and the President of the Security Council on important issues pertaining to international peace and security.

"In conclusion, I must emphasize that multilateralism does not represent, in any sense, a threat to the sovereignty or national interests of Member States. In fact, it offers the only way to address the complex challenges that no country could ever overcome on its own. My role as the President of General Assembly is to serve as the de facto guardian of multilateralism. I urge Member States to stand together to uphold international law and a system based on rules, dialogue and cooperation. I also trust the Security Council to successfully carry out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"It has become clear that peace is not just about the absence of war. To be sustainable, peace needs to be nurtured before, during and after conflicts. Development, peace and security and human rights are all interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Only by embracing multilateralism can we address the many challenges to international peace, security and prosperity. Let us work together to ensure success on all counts."

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ambassador Al-Thani for her statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council.

Ms. King: I first wish to thank the Chinese presidency for convening today's meeting and inviting me to this open debate on multilateralism and strengthening the role of the United Nations. This debate demonstrates the importance that the Security Council attaches to reaffirming the values of the rules-based order created 73 years ago.

Three years ago we celebrated a big victory for multilateralism — the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The process was universal, integrated and inclusive. It represented the rich and the poor, Governments and non-governmental stakeholders and those concerned with each of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, economic development, social development and the environment, as well as peace and security. As we implement it, we cannot afford to forget that it was dialogue and a painstaking, inclusive approach that got us to this point.

It is troubling that multilateralism is so frequently being questioned today. Many are asking whether that agreement would be at all possible in today's political reality. But are we asking the right question? Perhaps the answer to our fears and concerns lies in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This open debate is an opportunity to remind ourselves that multilateralism works. It was multilateralism that delivered conditions for economic growth after the Second World War. It was multilateralism that allowed us to reach the objective of halving extreme poverty after 2000.

Climate change, technological disruption and the threat of nuclear war are the defining issues of our time. The issues of refugees, migration and trade need to be addressed. All of those challenges need a global solution. Only the United Nations allows everyone to bring their viewpoint and find common approaches and solutions. Now more than ever, we must keep the channels for dialogue wide open. How can we therefore enhance multilateralism?

We need to fulfil the commitments in the 2030 Agenda, which was the most ambitious and universal agenda ever adopted by the United Nations. Upholding the principles of the 2030 Agenda is paramount to solving our most pressing challenges. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development creates a space for real dialogue and a platform for knowledge-sharing. I am inspired by the strong commitment we have seen from the 102 countries that have already presented voluntary national reviews, with an additional 41 scheduled to present theirs in 2019. The High-level Political Forum to be held next year, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will review Sustainable Development Goals on jobs and growth, inequality, climate change, education and, of course, global partnerships, as well as address the theme on inclusiveness and equality — all relevant as we grapple with the burning issues of our time.

The High-level Political Forum, which will also meet under the auspices of the General Assembly at the summit level in September next year, provides us with a perfect opportunity to take stock, address solutions and catalyse action towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to global cooperation and create the

conditions for peace and sustainable development, because we cannot have either unless we have both.

The Economic and Social Council and the Security Council have cooperated in the past, when the Economic and Social Council ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict worked closely with the Security Council ad hoc working group on conflict in Africa, in Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, during the period from 2002 to 2007. Another example of joint efforts and integrated approaches was the request by the Security Council for the Economic and Social Council's advice on a long-term programme of support for Haiti in 1999. Members of the Security Council may wish to consider whether the use of Article 65 of the Charter of the United Nations, on the exchange of information between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, could be a way to strengthen the dialogue between the two councils.

I am optimistic that we can bring about more coherence across the three main pillars of the United Nations. The working relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is becoming stronger. For the first time, the presidency of the Economic and Social Council has been invited to address the annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission, which will focus on the Sahel. The following day, on 13 November, the Economic and Social Council-PBC joint meeting will address the linkages between climate change and challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel. The presidency was also invited this year for the first time to brief the Human Rights Council on the outcomes of this year's High-level Political Forum, a seizing of the opportunity created by resolution 37/25 to mainstream the 2030 Agenda into the human rights agenda.

The Economic and Social Council provides the space for non-governmental organizations to give voice to their hopes and dreams for the future. Its Commission on the Status of Women is also a space for accountability on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. I also offer the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum as a space for an integrated dialogue on youth and peace and security to discuss the economic underpinnings of the historic Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), adopted in 2015.

While we must continue to break down silos between the main organs, it is also clear that they are in need of reform. Indeed, the membership recognized the wisdom of the Secretary-General's reform efforts last session. Still outstanding, however, is the much-needed reform of the Security Council. Of critical importance also is the ongoing work on the revitalization of the General Assembly and the efforts to align the work of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. As President of the Economic and Social Council, it is my responsibility — and a priority — to facilitate the implementation of the innovations mandated in the outcomes of the review process aimed at strengthening the Economic and Social Council, as articulated in General Assembly 72/305.

With the 2030 Agenda, we pledged that no one would be left behind, and we committed to endeavour to first reach the furthest behind. We should be guided by that principle in our pursuit of the world we want and that should be the basis for reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism.

In closing, I draw the Council's attention to the words of the late, great mathematician Stephen Hawking. In his last book, entitled *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*, Hawking explained that when we see the Earth from space, we see ourselves as a whole. We see the unity and not the divisions. It is such a simple image with a compelling message: one planet, one human race. Stephen Hawking died earlier this year, but not before issuing his own call to action, which I quote as follows:

> "I hope that going forward ... people with power can show creativity, courage and leadership. Let them rise to the challenge of the Sustainable Development Goals and act ... I am very aware of the preciousness of time. Seize the moment, act now."

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. King for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Judge Yusuf.

Judge Yusuf: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the People's Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I also thank you, Sir, for taking the initiative to convene this meeting and inviting me to participate in it.

Some would say that my participation in this debate from The Hague is possible because of technology. That is perhaps true, but it is not the entire story. They are forgetting about multilateralism. Technology needs multilateral rules to be able to cross borders. The fibre-optic technology that carries digital data relies on submarine cables in various maritime jurisdictions. It is only through multilateral rules, such as those set forth in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, that we can make this viable. Even for the scheduling of this meeting, we all automatically rely on time-zone rules that were established in a multilateral framework as early as 1884, during the International Meridian Conference.

Regulating global issues through a web of bilateral agreements has been tried in the past. It has never worked. That spider web simply collapses on itself. It produces no silk. At best, it leads to a fragmented legal order composed of contradictory international obligations. The predictability, stability and certainty of the rule of law disappear. That is why the Council's initiative is timely today as we celebrate the end of the First World War 100 years ago, which gave new impetus to the development of multilateralism.

Multilateralism is the result of human experience and civilization. It is the only path forward in a world in which we have all become neighbours. For the International Court of Justice, multilateralism is a condition not only of its existence; it is also that of its proper functioning and effectiveness. Bilateral agreements can create arbitral tribunals, but they cannot create judicial institutions consisting of an independent and impartial judiciary that represents the principal legal systems of the world and decides cases on the basis of law. The Court therefore owes its very existence to multilateralism. To allow for the functioning of the Court, multilateral conventions provide a large share of the law applicable to disputes that are submitted to the Court. On the other hand, the Court's decisions remove uncertainties from international conventions by interpreting and applying the provisions of those conventions.

In addition, some multilateral conventions of a regional nature — such as the 1948 American Treaty on Pacific Settlement, among Latin American countries, and the 1957 European Convention for the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, among States parties — give jurisdiction to our Court on disputes arising in those regions of the world. Other conventions, such as those that are characterized by the Court as instruments of a universal or quasi-universal character — such as the case concerning *Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company, Limited (Belgium v. Spain)* — give authority to the Court, through their compromissory clauses, to protect the shared values of the international community. That is the case of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1951 and other human rights instruments, as well as the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 and 1963. With regard to its effectiveness, the Court has to rely on multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations, to ensure compliance with its decisions. That may be done by the Security Council under Article 94 of the Charter of the United Nations. It has been done in the past by the Secretary-General, at his own initiative, in the *Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria case (Cameroon v. Nigeria; Equatorial Guinea intervening).*

The decisions of the Court have made notable contributions to multilateralism. Allow me to refer to three of them very briefly.

First, the Court has developed and clarified the law of treaties that makes multilateralism possible. It is the Court that established the object and purpose test to ascertain the permissibility and validity of reservations to multilateral treaties, allowing a broad participation in multilateral conventions without jeopardizing the normative integrity of the Court's provisions.

Secondly, the Court clarified in the advisory opinion concerning reparation for injuries suffered in the service of the United Nations that multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations, enjoy an international legal personality that is separate from that of their member States. That decision of the Court has strengthened the institutional pillars of multilateral organizations, including the United Nations.

Thirdly and finally, the Court contributed to the emergence of erga omnes obligations in international law, whereby it distinguishes between legal obligations owed to the international community as a whole and those owed to individual States. In doing so, the Court enabled all States parties to multilateral conventions to serve as guardians of compliance with those rules.

To conclude, allow me to refer again to the advisory opinion concerning reparation that I mentioned a moment ago, in which the Court observed that throughout its history, the development of international law has

been influenced by the requirements of international life and that the progressive increase in the collective activities of States has already given rise to instances of action at the international level. The requirements of international life and the increase in the collective activities of States, which the Court spoke of, reveal the inadequacy of unilateral or bilateral actions to address the challenges facing our increasingly interconnected world. They also dictate the need for multilateral cooperation in a diverse and complex range of areas of common concern to humankind. It is that common concern, recognized in many multilateral conventions, together with the shared values we all hold dear, that renders imperative the strengthening and consolidation of the multilateral system and the rules and institutions that underpin it.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Judge Yusuf for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of China.

I would like to begin by thanking Secretary-General Guterres for participating in today's meeting and for his briefing. I would also like to thank Ambassador Al-Thani, Ambassador King and Judge Yusuf for their briefings.

Today, the heads of the main organs established under the Charter of the United Nations are gathered here in the Security Council Chamber. Together with Member States, we are jointly sending a clarion call in support of multilateralism, a stronger role for the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security. As such, this meeting carries an important historical meaning.

As the President of the Security Council for this month, China proposed the convening of today's open debate with a view to addressing the emerging issues and challenges confronting international peace and security in the current circumstances, as well as exploring ways to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, facilitate the effective performance of the Council's function as a collective security mechanism, and advance the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Nations embodies humankind's aspirations for peace and development. More than 70 years ago, on the ruins of the Second World War, we built the international system, with the United Nations at its centre. The world today is going through a new round of profound development, as well as tectonic changes and adjustments. The protracted and emerging geopolitical flashpoints, the looming shadow of terrorism and armed conflict, the proliferation of drivers of instability and uncertainty, as well as increased risks and challenges are all hallmarks of our times. As a result of the rise in unilateralism and protectionism, the international order and global governance system are under attack.

It is fitting to say that the world needs multilateralism and a stronger United Nations more than ever. The need to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations is the consensus of the international community. During the recent general debate of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, Member States took the floor to call for supporting multilateralism, enhancing the role of the United Nations and sustaining the rules-based international order. During the general debate, the President of the General Assembly, Ms. Espinosa Garcés, stressed that multilateralism is the only viable response to the global problems facing humankind, and the Secretary-General stated that working together multilaterally is not optional, but rather the only answer (see A/73/PV.6). That shows that multilateralism is a prevailing trend and the common aspiration of all people, representing the right direction of history.

The most fundamental principle of multilateralism is that international affairs should be handled on the basis of consultation among States and in accordance with agreed rules — a process in which the interests and concerns of all States should be accommodated. States should engage with one another in a spirit of consultation, respect rules and order, and solve problems collectively.

China is a founding Member of the United Nations and was the first country to sign the Charter. China has been steadfast in maintaining the purposes and principles of the Charter and in safeguarding the central role of the United Nations in international affairs. When addressing the General Assembly during the general debate in September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping systematically elaborated the important concept of building a community of shared future for humankind, guiding the way to a brighter future for all humankind (see A/70/PV.13).

Multilateralism is an effective way of maintaining peace and promoting development. How can we uphold

and champion multilateralism in the new era? China wishes to offer the following proposals. We must abide by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, honour our commitments, fulfil international obligations, follow in good faith the rules collectively defined by the international community, and comply with international law and the basic norms governing international relations. We must remain committed to win-win cooperation.

We now live in a global village. Faced with terrorism and other global challenges, no country can cope with such phenomena on its own. We must deepen multilateral cooperation in order to attain universal and common security. Differences and disputes must be resolved through peaceful and rational dialogue and consultation. Dialogue and partnership should prevail over confrontation and alliance. Solutions should be found through diplomatic and political means. We should advocate for a security concept featuring common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. We should insist that all countries, big and small, are equal. We should respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and increase the representation and voice of development countries, as well as medium-sized and small States, in international affairs. We should translate our commitments to multilateralism into concrete actions, solve practical problems, seek tangible results and bring real benefits to the peoples of all countries.

The United Nations is the standard-bearer of multilateralism. China staunchly supports multilateralism and the maintenance of the authority and role of the United Nations. We hope that the United Nations will continue to uphold fairness and justice and play a leading role in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and, in particular, boistering global cooperation in addressing global challenges, thereby making the United Nations relevant to all people.

The Security Council, as the core of the international collective security mechanism, bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Let us demonstrate unity, wisdom and courage, effectively fulfil the solemn duty entrusted to this organ by the United Nations Charter, and give full play to the role of the Security Council. We must redouble our efforts in political mediation and good offices, scale up our cooperation with regional organizations, strengthen United Nations peacekeeping operations, and give primacy to conflict prevention.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, China maintains a consistent position of impartiality with regard to international and regional hotspot issues, and has put forward constructive proposals for the political settlement of disputes. China is an important troop-contributing country and the second-largest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations. At this very moment, more than 2,500 Chinese peacekeepers are vigilantly securing peace in United Nations missions across the world.

Development is the basis for maintaining peace and security. As the largest developing country, China has been rigorously implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and supporting and stimulating the development of other countries while pursuing its own growth. China's plan to jointly develop the Belt and Road Initiative with other countries is an offering of public goods to the world. The Initiative is underpinned by the principle of broad consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. It originated in China and belongs to the world. Its developments will benefit an increasing number of countries and peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that China remains committed to defending the international order and to pursuing multilateralism. We stand ready to join hands with all States to build a community of a shared future for humankind and a more peaceful world, with a better live and greater happiness for all people.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to those other members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I align myself with the statements to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and the Nordic countries.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely debate on a subject that engages not only us at the United Nations but also communities and people worldwide. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected and interdependent, we must constantly reflect on the fundamental purpose of our cooperation here at the United Nations. Let me also thank the Secretary-General and our other briefers this morning.

A rules-based international order and multilateral cooperation, with the United Nations at its core, are perhaps more important than ever. Those are cornerstones of Swedish foreign policy, as well as the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union. Multilateralism also represents an end in itself, as it embodies humankind's commitments to coexistence and cooperation. Ultimately, multilateralism is how we unite for peace and alleviate human suffering. However, multilateralism and the United Nations are also increasingly under pressure. Short-sighted and narrow interests stand ready to exploit the Organization's shortcomings. Failure to deliver on our commitments for peace, security and development risks turning them into empty words, paving the way for cynicism and polarization. The risks, challenges and threats of our time require joint action. Climate change, weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and violent extremism all have consequences that go beyond the scope of any single State. Multilateral cooperation is required. We already have the norms and structures — we are now living at a time for action and implementation.

Fortunately, the evidence is clear — we can do it if we put our minds to it. The recent substantial multilateral achievements — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the sustaining peace agenda — are all powerful illustrations of what can be achieved through multilateral cooperation, as are the rules-based multilateral world trade system upheld by the World Trade Organization. Not least, we have encouraging examples from all over the world, where collaboration and cooperation on all issues, from peacekeeping to climate action, have resulted in a better life and hope for the future for so many. Such achievements must never be degraded to mere ink on paper. We owe it to the people to deliver results. Let me highlight three key aspects that we believe need to be the focus to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations.

First, we must embrace prevention. For the Council to be able to fulfil its task we need to act on the full range of threats to international peace and security. We need to be better at identifying risks and root causes of conflicts, and we must ensure that our response is comprehensive. Early warnings must also lead to early action. A better understanding of climate-related security risks is an obvious example.

The global norms against the use of weapons of mass destruction are indispensable pillars of the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime that protect us against the dangers of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their horrific consequences for humanity. The repeated use of chemical weapons and worrying tendencies regarding nuclear capabilities and doctrines paint an ominous picture. Safeguarding the non-use norms must be an overarching priority and remains a crucial component of prevention. To that end, every effort must be made to ensure a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2020. The Council should also stand behind the Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament initiative, launched earlier this year by the Secretary-General, and increased high-level United Nations engagement.

Secondly, we need to keep the Charter of the United Nations and international law at the core of our cooperation. The Charter of the United Nations was drafted against the backdrop of a collapse of the international order and a surge in nationalism, which led to war and human suffering. Although the threats look different today, the faith in humankind's ability to unite for peace and overcome differences remains at the heart of multilateralism. We, the Members of the United Nations, have already committed to the principles of the Charter. It is contingent upon each Member State to abide by and defend the rules-based international order that it prescribes. In order to effectively prevent and resolve threats to international peace and security, cooperation continues to be the only way forward. We must shoulder our joint responsibility to uphold international law, including human rights. It is no less vital today than 70 years ago. That is not merely a question of political will but a legal obligation to be fulfilled in good faith. Above all, it is a duty to humanity.

The international legal system founded on human rights, democracy and the principles of the rule of law must be constantly defended. That has become particularly clear in the light of the repressive and reactionary trend that we see in several parts of the world today, where in particular the protection and promotion of human rights are increasingly being called into question.

In the context of prevention, the provisions on pacific settlement of disputes, as laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter, also contain powerful instruments to resolve disputes based on the rule of law and before

they escalate into serious conflicts. The International Court of Justice is fundamental to upholding and clarifying the rules of international law, including its role in maintaining and promoting the rule of law. As a deterrent to international crimes and a force against impunity, the International Criminal Court plays a key role in preventing conflict.

Finally, we need a United Nations in tune with our times that is relevant and legitimate to all. There is no more effective way to build and maintain trust and confidence in multilateralism and the United Nations system than delivering concrete results in the areas of peace, security and development where it matters the most for the millions of women, men, boys and girls who live in the shadow of war and poverty. The United Nations system is a global public good, and it is in our shared strategic interest to keep investing in it. The long-term gains from doing so are far greater than any short-term costs.

It is therefore imperative that we continue to support the implementation of the Secretary-General's reforms of the United Nations system at a time when they are needed more than ever. Those reforms offer an unprecedented opportunity to make the United Nations more flexible and effective and better equipped to respond to current and emerging challenges. That is the recipe for enhancing trust and confidence in multilateralism. Not least, the ongoing reform process is a key opportunity to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all aspects of the work of the United Nations system.

As members of the Security Council, we need to do better in meeting our responsibilities under the United Nations Charter to maintain international peace and security. We need to work harder to overcome our differences and come together in united responses to effectively address the many difficult issues on our agenda. Our working methods should be more results-oriented and focus on taking meaningful decisions that make a difference to people's lives on the ground. That is not only our responsibility under the Charter but also to all members of the General Assembly. However, first and foremost, we owe it to the people affected by conflict, oppression, poverty and climate change throughout the world.

To achieve that, all members of the Council must do their utmost to ensure that it can fulfil its responsibility as stipulated by the United Nations Charter. We call for a renewed discussion on limiting the use of the veto, since its use is ultimately crippling the United Nations. We also need a Council that better reflects the realities of today's world through enhanced African representation, as well as Asian and Latin American representation.

We also need a shift in narrative. We should not only defend multilateralism but go on the offensive. Let us enhance it so that it is utilized to its full potential. We would like to encourage the Secretary-General to continue his ambitious reform agenda and his focus on bringing us together and truly work multilaterally towards sustaining peace, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Members can count on Sweden's continued firm commitment to multilateralism and to the United Nations.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I thank the Chinese presidency for convening this timely open debate on multilateralism, which represents one of the great contributions of the United Nations to humankind. We would like to express our appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres, Ms. Alya Ahmed Said Al-Thani, Acting President of the General Assembly, Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council, and Judge Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, for their insightful and frank briefings. My delegation would like to make some comments on the following steps and measures to strengthen multilateralism with a view to addressing emerging threats.

We believe that we need to reinforce the principles that govern international coexistence — global leadership, shared responsibility and collective action. Challenges such as protracted wars, unresolved conflicts, terrorism, extremism, poverty, disease, illicit migration, the instability of the humanitarian space and climate change are beyond the scope of any one nation. These problems are aggravated by unpredictable regional and global insecurity, the erosion of internationally legally binding norms, external interference, proxy wars and the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In that regard, my country's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his manifesto entitled "The World. The Twenty-First Century", called on world leaders to work jointly for a just global economic and social order. He also urged that we work to end all conflicts and terrorism, abolish WMDs and eliminate other scourges by the time the United Nations marks its centenary.

Kazakhstan is therefore committed to promoting multilateralism and considers the United Nations to be its core element. During its tenure on the Security Council, my country has consistently sought to introduce the best possible kind of multilateralism, transparency, impartiality, honest brokerage, confidence-building and partnerships — the hallmarks of our foreign policy — into the Council's day-to-day activities. We have also prioritized the issues of nuclear energy and water and food security in our work in the Council and will do so beyond our term.

We also call on all to stand together for a rules-based global order and safer world, adhering to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. This is important in order to prevent international norms from being torn apart by narrow, vested national interests, distrust and geopolitical tensions. We stand for a people-centred, egalitarian multilateralism that leaves no one behind. We also advocate for empowering women and young people, as well as expanding their rights and opportunities, because we are confident that they will lay the groundwork for conflict prevention and sustainable development. Multilateralism must also be invigorated by implementing the decisions taken in Addis Ababa, Sendai, Paris and now Marrakech, as well as in the framework of other global processes. That will ensure not only early warnings of multifaceted threats but also our ability to take early action to avert them. Our outreach is particularly oriented towards building capacities in least-developed and landlocked least-developed countries and small island developing States. In that context, we believe it is important to ensure concerted international efforts to create just, resilient and stable societies in vulnerable States, among other things.

Multilateralism has to be innovative and multidimensional. As far as possible, therefore, it must include valuable forums that shape the rules of the game, such as, for example, within the peacebuilding architecture, across the areas of defence and security; within the development system, through investments by multilateral banks, trading and commerce; on the humanitarian front; across the public health sector and with non-State actors, such as religious leaders, academics, the media and civil society, who can exercise significant positive influence under each and every United Nations pillar. We therefore need people-to-people connectivity, not just across borders but also transcending continents. This can lead us towards a community of a shared future for mankind, as proposed by the Chinese presidency. Indeed, as the Chinese proverb states,

> "If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people."

We should also strive for close partnerships of the United Nations with multilateral regional arrangements, such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; the League of Arab States, the African Union, the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community and other international bodies. That is necessary to strengthen these existing platforms for regional and subregional dialogues on security. Through that, we must shape harmonization in policymaking and dialogue for development aid, as well as assistance in implementing regional programmes. Such interaction is important, because nowadays regional and subregional structures play key roles in reforming the United Nations systems, particularly its peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture.

The field visits of the Security Council and its Committees to the Lake Chad basin, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Haiti, Colombia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and, recently, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have indicated the significance of the three-pronged strategy that Kazakhstan introduced. It consists in strengthening the security-development nexus, revamping and invigorating the regional approach and utilizing the United Nations principles of Delivering as One. This strategy, which will complement the Secretary-General's reforms, was approved by the Council in its presidential statement S/PRST/2018/1. In the future, we intend to continue expanding and developing that strategy to incorporate it into wider United Nations operations, among other things. We also underline the importance of the presidency's Belt and Road Initiative in that regard.

International terrorism cannot be defeated without a coordinated response and approach. That is why Kazakhstan launched a code of conduct aimed at helping to achieve a world free of terrorism with an inaugural high-level event and signing ceremony held

at United Nations Headquarters on 28 September. The document coalesced like-minded Member States around the call to honour their commitments to implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other instruments. In Central Asia, working in close collaboration with United Nations entities such as the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, we have launched the third phase of our regional joint action plan for implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, for which we were the first country to become a donor, voluntarily contributing 10 per cent of the plan's overall budget and sending it to the United Nations.

Kazakhstan has proven itself to be a moral leader in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and as an act of multilateralism with its neighbours, created the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Our country, which is among those that have been most affected by the tragic consequences of nuclear tests, is making enormous efforts to reach global zero and is enabling cooperation among the nuclear-weapon-free zones. Our story clearly tells the world that true protection comes not from nuclear weapons but from mutual trust. It also means that multilateralism will move forward if we can break the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, as well as at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

It is evident that Kazakhstan has contributed to multilateralism in innumerable ways, the most recent being the deployment of 120 well-qualified peacekeepers to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, as part of an Indian battalion. We are proud that this innovative deployment occurred during Kazakhstan's non-permanent membership of the Security Council. We express our gratitude to our Indian colleagues, as well as to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support.

To conclude, Kazakhstan intends to join other Member States in rallying for the defence of multilateralism. We reiterate that it is only through our collective will and solidarity that we can turn this world in crisis into a planet of hope and great promise.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Chinese presidency for organizing today's discussion on issues related to strengthening the principles of multilateralism. The proposed theme is highly relevant, as it enables us to critically take stock of the state of international relations and to discuss ways to overcome the systemic problems it has accumulated. We thank the Secretary-General, António Guterres, for his assessment, and Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council, Ms. Al-Thani, Acting President of the General Assembly, and Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf for their briefings.

Our world today is undergoing a period of profound changes that are leading to the creation of a polycentric international system. Thanks to the global activation of cross-border economic ties and the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, new centres of economic growth and political influence are gaining traction. They are seeking broader participation in international affairs and striving to create independent domestic and foreign policies that correspond to their national interests and to choose development models that reflect their national, cultural and religious identities. Those trends are only going to grow.

In the circumstances, the significance of multilateral diplomacy mechanisms, the joint quest for responses to common threats and challenges and the provision of collective leadership is also growing. The role of the United Nations and its Security Council as a central organ for world policy, as well as that of flexible global governance formats such as the Group of 20, is increasing, as is the importance of integrated regional and interregional associations. However, the desire of most States to strengthen the polycentric foundations of the global order is clashing with some players' attempts to preserve their global dominance in order to gain unilateral advantages. They have no inhibitions about circumventing the United Nations and the Security Council and taking a selective approach to meeting their international legal obligations. They declare themselves to be multilateral but label those who do not agree with their policies and methods revisionists and opponents of multilateralism. In other words, they recognize multilateralism only on their own conditions.

One need not look far for examples of breaches of multilateralism. The basic principles of the settlement in the Middle East, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme, the commitments under the World Trade Organization and the multilateral Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the key disarmament agreements for strategic

stability are all under attack, along with many others. As a result, the international law that the post-war world order was founded on is being devalued. We hear statements trumpeted that not only call into question the legal force of international treaties but also prioritize narrow, unilateral approaches above decisions taken within the United Nations framework, among other things. Within the United Nations, we have already drawn attention to the fact that our Western colleagues are relentlessly trying to replace the primacy of international law in world affairs with some kind of rules-based order. Those very rules are devised based on political expediency and are a clear example of double standards.

A similar approach is being used to impose sanctions on annoying States, declare trade wars and stoke tensions in international relations, while the reasons given for such measures are becoming increasingly far-fetched, whether for alleged interference in elections or unsubstantiated accusations of the use of chemical weapons and other such sins. In order to accuse somebody of something today, it seems to be considered sufficient to add the phrase "highly likely". No evidence is necessary and the accused's views are of no interest to the accusers. While such methods are not new, they are now front and centre. But we well remember how many times false pretexts have been used to justify interventions and unleash wars. We need only recall the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, the occupation of Iraq in 2003 under openly lying pretexts whose legacy continues to be a heavy burden on Iraqis, and the crude manipulation of the Security Council's mandate in Libya in 2011, which resulted in destruction and chaos that still continue. The same methods continue to be used against Syria today. These unilateral military actions have plunged the Middle East and North Africa into chaos and created a breeding ground for rampant extremism and terrorism.

There are disturbing attempts to drag some countries into military alliances against the will of their peoples, while other States are threatened with punishment for freely choosing their partners and allies. In the Balkans in particular, the States of the region are being promised future happiness and insistently dragged into NATO, with invocations of the inadmissibility of meddling in their internal affairs actually accompanied by shameless interference. This kind of bloc mindset only produces additional threats to international security and is ruinous for the principles of multilateralism. We are seeing the space for constructive international cooperation contracting, confrontations growing, unpredictability generally increasing, nuclear doctrines being revised and the threshold for the acceptability of the use of nuclear weapons lowered, with a significant rise in the risk of spontaneous conflicts, and of course all of that affects the activities of the United Nations.

In the next few days we will be commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. That was a strange war, which seemed to begin by itself. Its protagonists and participants could not even imagine the horrific disaster that would follow or the fact that the First World War would spawn an even greater disaster, the Second World War. The situation today compels us to examine those historical lessons cautiously and to hope that such scenes of reckless, unbridled spiralling, catastrophic confrontation will not be repeated.

In the wake of the Second World War, we founded this Organization. For the first time in history, the principles of multilateralism were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, establishing a workable mechanism for global governance through the harmonization of States' positions. The key elements for a polycentric world order were outlined, along with the basic principles and norms of international relations, from the sovereign equality of States and the prohibition of interference in their internal affairs to the ban on the use of force in international relations without the permission of the Security Council or beyond the limits of self-defence.

We also want to point out that according to the Charter, the use of sanctions mechanisms is the exclusive prerogative of the Security Council. Unilateral restrictions and attempts to apply national legislation extraterritorially are illegitimate, lead only to increased confrontations in international affairs and make the collective quest for solutions to emerging problems harder. Moreover, as practice has shown, such measures are ineffective as well as illegal.

In order to avoid further complicating the international situation, it is important to uphold international law — the law proper, not some rule or other — including the Charter, State sovereignty and respect for one another's cultural and civilizational specificities — and to strive for cooperation, not confrontation. We must all acknowledge that our peoples have the right to independently determine their

own future without outside interference in their internal affairs. We will see positive results when States unite their efforts in the interests of mutually beneficial and respectful cooperation. That is the only approach that can produce dividends for all the members of the international community and a fair, democratic and harmonious world order.

We hope that today's discussions will develop into a serious conversation about the role of the United Nations, a crucial and key mechanism for regulating modern international relations.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General and all the briefers. In a short time I will be leaving the Security Council and my post as United States Ambassador to the United Nations. My service here has been a great honour and I will miss it. I am grateful to have the opportunity to discuss the purposes of multilateralism and what we can do to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for the common good.

The American people believe deeply in the principles of peace, security and human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. For that reason, the United States is by far the largest contributor to the United Nations budget. Our support for multilateralism at the United Nations has not been limited to rhetoric. It has been concrete, in both our words and our deeds. Year in and year out, the United States contributes 20 per cent of the funding of the United Nations system. United States taxpayers in places like Oklahoma, Idaho and Minnesota provide 25 per cent of the $7-billion budget for the United Nations peacekeeping operations thousands of miles away in Kinshasa, Juba, Pristina and elsewhere. Those same taxpayers contribute more than 35 per cent of the funding for the World Food Programme, the world's largest multilateral humanitarian organization. We contribute 13 per cent of the funding that allows UNICEF to help children worldwide. United States taxpayers shoulder 42 per cent of the burden of paying for the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The vast size of financial support that the United States gives the United Nations illustrates the seriousness with which we take that work and our commitment. But I will be honest. There are times when the American people question their generous support to the United Nations. There are times when we are tempted to believe that multilateralism has been a bad deal for the United States and that we could be more effective by advancing our principles and interests on our own. And there are times when that conclusion is correct. It is not that the American people are cheap. It is not that we are selfish — quite the contrary, we are a blessed nation. A representative from an African country recently lectured me and quoted a passage from the Bible. He said that to whom much is given, much is expected. That is certainly true, and the American people have given much. But multilateralism requires that we all contribute and that we all work together for the common good. Everyone has skin in the game and everyone should ultimately benefit. The American people have no expectation of always getting our own way, but we do have a legitimate expectation to get a return on our investment in multilateralism.

We do not regard that work as charity. It is our contribution to the advancement of peace, security and human rights in every regior of the world. When we all contribute and work towards those goals, this body can accomplish great things. North Korea is a good example. The Security Council achieved remarkable unity while taking real action. We sanctioned the Pyongyang regime more completely than any country in a generation. That is a credit to the Council and its members. No other multilateral forum could have achieved that kind of unity. Peacekeeping is another good example. We are more effective when we work to ensure peace as a global community. Together, we can build the trust and impartiality necessary to mediate conflict and protect innocent civilians.

But multilateralism is not good in and of itself. It is a means to an end. It is neither good nor bad; only its goals are good or bad. And multilateralism fails when it fails to support the goals of peace, security and human rights. When the General Assembly gives the barbaric Cuban regime a pass for violating the rights of the Cuban people just to poke the United States in the eye, that is a failure of multilateralism. Action like that does not seek to protect human rights; it seeks to shelter authoritarian regimes from criticism on human rights. It is not worthy of the time or the attention of the United Nations, and it is certainly not worthy of the support of the American people.

When the Human Rights Council hosts some of the world's most flagrant human rights offenders and gives them cover for their abuses, that is a failure of multilateralism. When countries invoke sovereignty

when it suits them but ignore it when it does not, that is a failure of multilateralism. That is a failure to work together toward the common good. One of my goals as United States Ambassador has been to show the American people value for their investment in the United Nations. That has meant working to prove improve the efficiency of our peacekeeping missions, mitigate the North Korean nuclear threat and put human rights at the centre of the work of the Council, among many other things. It has also meant more practical things, such as taking a hard look at where our foreign aid is serving United States interests and values and where it is not. Our aid dollars should not be on autopilot. They should go to where they can do the most good and where we can expect cooperation and friendship in return.

Showing value to the American people for their support of multilateralism also means rebalancing how we finance the United Nations and our peacekeeping operations. Next month, we will have an important decision to take on how we distribute the costs of peacekeeping. The United States is currently assessed a disproportionate share of those costs — even for us. Our contribution of 25 per cent of the peacekeeping budget is more than fair. Insisting on more, especially when other nations' assessments are so low, only erodes support for the United Nations. I urge everyone to support more equitable burden-sharing when it comes to the financing of peacekeeping. That is not just a question of fairness; it is a question of the ongoing success of multilateralism itself. Support for collective action falters when its burdens fail to match its benefits, and no multilateral work, no matter how worthy its goals are, can continue in the long term when it takes its most generous donors for granted.

I know I have spoken some hard truths this morning, but I have done so out of my obligation to reflect the American people's sincere belief in this institution's founding purpose. When we work in the true spirit of multilateralism — the spirit of principled objectives, shared burdens and respect — this institution is capable of great things. The United States looks forward to many more successful years of collaboration with the United Nations in support of peace, security and human rights for all people in the world.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate on strengthening multilateralism at a very important time in our world today. We also thank the Chinese delegation for preparing the concept paper for this meeting (S/2018/982, annex).

We thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable statement. We also thank the Representative of the State of Qatar, Ms. Alya Al-Thani, who delivered a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly; Ms. Inga Rhonda King, the President of the Economic and Social Council; and Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yousef, the President of the International Court of Justice, for their briefings today. This has been a rare and important opportunity to listen to all the Presidents of those organs of the United Nations.

Our world today is facing conventional and contemporary challenges. The threats we face are transnational and more complicated and interlinked than ever before, as a result of the information technology revolution and significant advances in technology, communications and transportation. Threats to international peace and security are ongoing and have unfortunately been on the rise in recent years. We see that especially in the Middle East, where a number of countries are enduring security and political instability. The threat of terrorism is a daily reality, and no region around the world is safe from its evils. The consequences of armed conflict in one region are now capable of having political, security, economic and humanitarian implications for other, safe countries in the world. All those consequences may come to be if we do not address them with radical solutions. Humanitarian disasters and the migrant and refugee crises arising from armed conflicts at the intra-State and inter-State levels are a case in point. All those challenges and more that are confronting our world today require collective action. International challenges require international solutions. No one country, regardless of its size, military or economic strength, can address those challenges alone.

Multilateralism is at the core of the global system that we all accepted when we established the United Nations, over seven decades ago. The cornerstone of that multilateral global system is the Charter of the United Nations, which is considered an instrument of international law and establishes a clear framework to govern relations between countries. All Member States must commit to the Charter and its noble purposes and principles, in words and deeds.

The Charter of the United Nations is as relevant as ever today. It is the basis of our collective security system

and provides different tools to deal with challenges in a collective and efficient manner. Much has been accomplished pursuant to the provisions of the Charter. However, we must recognize that the aspirations as set out in the purposes and principles — such as living in peace and security without violence — continue to be elusive.

We must work in a collective and unified manner to contain violence and aggression, build friendly relations between countries, respect the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, promote equal rights, uphold the right of peoples to self-determination and encourage respect for human rights.

The State of Kuwait is strongly committed to the Charter. During our presidency of the Security Council in February, we held a high-level meeting on the Charter of the United Nations and its role in maintaining international peace and security. The meeting was an opportunity to build on what was discussed in previous meetings on this topic, including the meeting held by China during its presidency of the Council in February 2015 (see S/PV.7389).

As we talk about multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, allow me to recall the process of liberating the State of Kuwait in 1991. That is considered an example that shows what can be accomplished when the international community works together under the auspices of the United Nations and through legitimate resolutions adopted by the Security Council to support the rule of law, righteousness and justice. The process of liberating the State of Kuwait is a historic model of the concept of collective security and a successful embodiment of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations in stopping aggression that was a blatant and clear violation of international law and the Charter.

In this month back in 1990, the Security Council adopted resolution 678 (1990), which granted the previous regime in Iraq until 15 January 1991 to withdraw from the State of Kuwait; otherwise all the necessary means were to be used to restore international peace and security. After that bitter invasion, it has been proven that the first line of defence of small countries such as the State of Kuwait is a global multilateral system based on law and justice that guarantees the rights, safety and security of small countries. We believe that it is necessary to enhance their representation in United Nations organs, given that the majority of United Nations Members are small countries.

We are concerned about the increasing trend of questioning the value of multilateralism and about measures taken by certain countries through their unilateral policies that place their narrow national interests above the public interest. That is undermining the international order that we have known since the end of the Second World War.

The State of Kuwait truly believes in the importance of multilateralism at the regional and international levels. We also believe in the importance of promoting collective action among countries and partnerships with regional organizations to reach solutions to the challenges in our region and in the wider world.

In that regard, the United Nations plays an important role in leading global action to confront such challenges, including international humanitarian action to alleviate the suffering of people from armed conflicts and natural disasters, while effectively contributing to regional and international efforts to resolve conflicts through peaceful means, including preventive diplomacy and mediation; ensuring the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; as well as confronting the consequences of climate change and enhancing human rights and the rule of law. We cannot achieve any progress in those matters, or others if we do not engage in collective action and constructive dialogue.

I would like to renew our support to the vision of the Secretary-General on reforming the peace and security pillars at the Secretariat. We support his annual report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1) where he stressed the importance of multilateralism. I also want to quote from the statement of the Secretary-General before world leaders, during the general debate of the General Assembly in September, where he summarized the state of our world today:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The world is more connected, yet societies are becoming more fragmented. Challenges are growing outward, while many people are turning inward. And multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most." (*A/73/PV.6, p. 1*)

(*spoke in Arabic*)

In conclusion, we call on the international community, especially the Security Council, to make more effort and enhance constructive partnerships and collective action to confront the political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges facing our world, and we also underscore that we cannot do that effectively unless we do it together in the context of multilateralism.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I want to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his informative and timely briefing. I would also like to acknowledge China's initiative in convening today's open debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Al-Thani, Ambassador King and Judge Yusuf for their contributions to our discussion.

I would also like to align myself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union

Let me concentrate on three issues that Poland finds as particularly vital for strengthening multilateralism — the global rules-based order, the role of regional organizations and adjusting the current challenges to the global system by addressing new threats to peace and security.

Poland seeks partnerships with all actors interested in building a multipolar world. Strengthening effective multilateralism and promoting a global rules-based order have been and remain our priorities. Our input to supporting multilateralism is embodied in our membership of the Security Council.

This year for the third time, Poland will host the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP). We will host the COP24 in Katowice, where we will gather to ensure the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement is inextricably linked to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. For that reason, global climate action should comprise the economic, social and ecological dimensions.

Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is critical in ensuring that the multilateral world order works and can be beneficial for all. From our perspective, the European Union remains as one of the best examples of a successful multilateral project. After centuries of with bloody conflicts, the European community enjoys a peaceful and most prosperous period in its history. Year after year, generations of young people from the 28 countries of the European Union can now study abroad and learn about new cultures, thereby fostering understanding and respect.

Poland is a strong supporter of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular in Africa. Therefore, we welcome the progress made in the United Nations-African Union partnership over the past couple of years. During that time, the African Union has taken on important responsibilities and its role in promoting peace and security has only expanded. We appreciate the ownership that it has constantly showed not only in tackling crises, but also in bringing together subregional organizations in a joint effort to ensure peace, stability and the development of the African continent.

Words of support for multilateralism are welcomed and much-needed, but it is through our collective action that we can really make a difference. A world order based on law is a pillar of effective multilateralism. The same rules must apply equally everywhere and to everyone. Everyone should have equal rights and equally proportional duties. The reform of the Security Council, which we support and in which we want to participate, should be about increasing the area of equal rights and competencies of all members of the Council. It is important that multilateralism serve a certain system of values and not be only a part of political technology and the game of interests. That system of values is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Multilateralism should be a commitment to the observance of values, such as respect for dignity and human life. It is about values that go beyond the political order and are not subject to a political definition, because they are the foundation of the political order in the world. Wherever basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are being systematically and widely violated and abuse, and whenever international crimes are being committed or weapons of mass destruction are used, the Security Council cannot remain idle. It is our responsibility to respond quickly and decisively. We should never forget about the triad constituting the foundation of the United Nations, which are interlinked and equally important — peace and security, human rights and development.

There are significant new threats and challenges to international peace and security that were unknown to, or underestimated by, the founders of the United Nations in 1945. Terrorism, foreign fighters, violent extremism, cyberattacks, refugees flows, uncontrolled migration and information warfare, as well as transnational organized crime, have all undermined global stability. Moreover, we see powerful and determined non-State actors who have no respect for the norms of international law and human rights. The world has become more interrelated in terms of communication, trade and economic interdependence. There is no way to tackle all of those issues in an effective way unilaterally and achieve a sustainable outcome. No single State can go it alone. Only together can we make a difference.

We continue to strongly support the Secretary-General's initiatives to make the United Nations delivery more effective and efficient on the ground, as well as his constant push to promote prevention and mediation. Conflict prevention and crisis management through mediation are one of the founding principles of the United Nations, and we cannot overemphasize its significance to multilateral diplomacy.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by expressing France's heartfelt thanks to the Chinese presidency. Your initiative, Sir, to convene the members of Security Council, as well as all Member States, to meet on the issue of multilateralism in defence of the United Nations is particularly welcome given the threats facing the multilateral system. I also thank all those who are speaking today and, above all, the Secretary-General for his unwavering commitment and the important perspectives that he just provided, which must inspire our work.

The international order that was built on the resolve to leave the horrors of the first half of the twentieth century behind us and that has been consolidated over the course of more than 70 years must not be taken for granted. That would be a big mistake. As the Secretary-General alluded to, opposing currents undeniably have never been as strong as they are now since the end of the Second World War. This fragile edifice, with the United Nations at its core, is needed more than ever in facing today's challenges. But it must evolve and be comprehensively reformed if it is to be able to meet them and stand up to the criticism and even attacks levelled against it.

The foundation of multilateralism is international law. The rule of law is in its DNA, as opposed to the law of the strongest and the law of the jungle. Respect for the law is at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations, together with, first and foremost, human rights — in one month, we will celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — international humanitarian law and, more generally, all obligations arising from treaties and under international law, in particular Security Council resolutions. The practice of multilateralism consists in the collective approach to crises with major global repercussions. As the concept paper (S/2018/982, annex) circulated by the presidency points out, a collective and cooperative approach to the peaceful settlement of disputes is the very essence of the United Nations. Our commitment is based on the conviction that collective responses to our shared problems is more effective than a set of disparate unilateral responses, or, to put it another way, in the face of today's global challenges, the juxtaposition of nationalisms can lead only to disaster for everyone. Based on experience, France believes that the precept of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts resides at the heart of multilateralism.

The advantage of multilateralism lies in its effectiveness to provide concrete responses to crises and major world issues, which holds truer than ever in an increasingly multipolar world, which by definition is more complex to deal with. A multipolar world therefore makes multilateralism even more imperative at a moment when a rationale based on power is weakening its very principles. Let us make no mistake: the only alternative to multilateralism in a multipolar world is a return to one consisting of spheres of influence, of which history has taught us the great dangers. Multilateralism and the United Nations are at a crossroads today.

My second point is the fact that the threats facing the international order, which we have inherited, must be taken extremely seriously. In some cases, they feed on our failures, but they result far less from the system's failure than from that of its members — their inability to unite in the Security Council and their failure to act on issues such as human rights violations, including women and children's rights, impunity for the most serious crimes and the absence of women's representation and participation in political processes, as well as climate change and famine, which are closely linked to issues relating to peace and security and will lead to future crises. Similarly, the world sees the attitude of every

Council member with regard to the issue of Syria, and the obstacles or support that they provide in dealing with that country's conflict within the framework that we set up for ourselves through resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). However, such threats are also fuelled by a more fundamental challenge. It is the challenge posed to the legal and political principles of multilateralism in the name of national sovereignty; to the institutions and functioning of the United Nations, including negotiation and compromise; and to agreements that have been signed, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal. With regard to the risks posed to multilateralism, a collective surge is needed at a few major levels. And that is the third point I would like to raise.

First of all, as President Macron reminded the General Assembly, the principle of State sovereignty is not at odds with the universality of our principles, the requirements of the rule of law or with effective multilateralism. That point is crucial and is a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations. The sovereign equality of States is the foundation on which the United Nations is built. It is the first principle listed in the Charter. Before that, the Charter outlines the purposes of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of peace, cooperation and respect for human rights. That means that there is no contradiction between respect for sovereignty and the effective implementation of our principles. To make that point even clearer: respect for State sovereignty does not mean handing over the Syrian people to the regime's goodwill or ignoring the fate of the Rohingyas in Burma.

Secondly, promoting and strengthening regional cooperation is an essential part of multilateralism, and Chapter VIII of the Charter provides for complementary United Nations action. The strengthening of relations between the United Nations and the European Union and between the United Nations and the African Union, action in support of African peace operations or the deployment of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel force and its coordination with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali consistently reflects the vital regional and subregional dimension. In that regard, I would like to highlight the Secretary-Generals' commitment to those various areas.

Thirdly, with regard to the major challenges we will all face in the future, it is the United Nations system, together with each one of us, that must provide the right responses. Whether it is economic and social inequalities, equality between women and men, sustainable development, environmental protection and the fight against climate change or issues related to education, health or migration, artificial intelligence, social networks and cybersecurity, we must continue to create regulation and cooperation methods and rules of law that will ensure a better future for our societies. To succeed, now more than ever, the multilateralism we value must be creative, open to civil society actors, plugged into the technological revolution under way and constantly in the process of reinventing itself. We achieved it through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the silent revolution to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. France will pursue that goal by focusing its 2019 presidency of the Group of Seven on combating inequality. On the other hand, we realize that reverting to the notion of every man for himself would mean simply giving up and preparing for future crises.

Fourthly, the system's ability to evolve will determine its effectiveness in meeting the challenges of this century. Multilateral institutions must undergo reform and, in many cases, are doing so. However, we cannot accept their legitimacy or funding being called into question in the name of an ideological approach. The Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and UNESCO play an indispensable role that we must protect and strengthen. If our framework for action is to retain its legitimacy over time, we must develop and adapt it. I would therefore like to reiterate France's support for the reform the Secretary-General has initiated in three areas: the peace and security architecture, the development system and the management of the United Nations. We will defend expanding both member categories of the Security Council so that its composition reflects today's balances of power, remains legitimate in everyone's eyes and is strengthened as a forum for consultation rather than obstruction. In the same spirit, France, along with Mexico, is taking the initiative — now supported by 101 Member States and could be implemented without delay — to suspend the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities. We call on all States Members of the United Nations, in particular the

other four permanent members of the Security Council, to join our initiative.

Given the considerable increase in the number of crises and global challenges, we do not have the right to simply yield to the temptation to withdraw and opt for unilateralism. Future generations will not forgive us, and they would be quite right not to do so. Multilateralism is a common good, whose positive effects are not always properly perceived or explained. Criticizing the United Nations — otherwise referred to here as UN-bashing — often guarantees a hollow victory. It is so much easier to do that than to work to strengthen the United Nations, but it is at odds with France's demanding and humanist approach. France calls on all of its partners to recommit to the United Nations within a framework of renewed and exacting multilateralism, while working together and employing what our Foreign Minister, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, refers to as goodwill powers. Such commitment is at the heart of France's identity and action. That is why President Macron will host the Paris Peace Forum in two days' time in Paris, which will bring together all global governance stakeholders — Governments, institutions, civil society actors and citizens — to discuss major global issues and develop collective responses together. That is the challenge for our generation.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, let me express our sincere thanks to China for organizing today's debate on such a timely and important topic, which is very relevant for building a safe, just and prosperous future for all. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the briefers for setting the stage for today's important debate.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union.

On 11 November, we will commemorate the end of First World War. The horrors of that war and of the Second World War still reverberate today. The lessons we have drawn from them have become part of our shared history and are at the basis of our common endeavour to prevent global conflict at all costs.

I will focus my intervention on three issues: multilateralism, United Nations reform and the importance of upholding international principles and rules.

Multilateralism is the only credible answer to the challenges we face today, such as climate change, migration, transnational crime and terrorism. We cannot address those challenges unilaterally or bilaterally; we need to tackle them together by using the international organizations and forums we created for that purpose and by finding common ground. However, we are witnessing a trend, including in the Security Council, where the multilateral approach is being challenged and undermined. It is a worrisome trend. When the multilateral system becomes paralysed, especially in the context of international peace and security, it is innocent people who suffer.

Too often, the Security Council fails to act. Examples of such failure can be found in Syria, Yemen and Myanmar. In the absence of action, ordinary citizens become victims, and impunity reigns.

The situation in Syria has been a stark reminder of a crisis of respect for the hard-won gains in international law — from the Geneva Conventions to the Charter of the United Nations and to the Chemical Weapons Convention. All of those norms have been trampled upon in Syria. In such a case, the primary responsibility rests with the Security Council. In the event of mass atrocities, a Council paralysed by the use of the veto will lead to its being circumvented, thereby weakening its position and undermining the multilateral order. It is for that reason that we support the French-Mexican initiative. It is our obligation as States Members of the United Nations to make sure the multilateral system works, which brings me to my second point: United Nations reform.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations in order to make the Organization fit to meet the challenges of today's rapidly changing world throughout the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important guide in that regard.

The overall aim is to strengthen the role of the United Nations where possible and to continuously renew our commitment to the United Nations Charter, in particular in the Security Council. In order to deal effectively with peace and security challenges, all members should shoulder their responsibilities. We are convinced that the world stands to gain from a Security Council that is more agile and effective in its operations

and whose composition is a better reflection of today's world.

On peacekeeping reform, we strongly support the Secretary-General's initiatives to make the United Nations delivery on the ground more effective and efficient, such as through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, with its emphasis on performance. Constructive multilateralism can also entail supporting new initiatives and forms of cooperation, for example, by working more closely with such regional organizations as the European Union and the African Union. Building on their resources, expertise and legitimacy, the United Nations can strengthen its role in dealing with crises throughout the conflict cycle, from prevention before conflict to sustaining peace after conflict.

I come now to my third point, namely, upholding international principles and rules. The Kingdom of the Netherlands has always championed, and will continue to champion, the rules-based international order and multilateral cooperation, especially on security matters and other issues of shared concern. Upholding the rule of law, ensuring accountability, promoting and protecting international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that binds us all, are vital to the legitimacy of the United Nations and multilateralism. There can be no lasting peace without justice. Multilateral cooperation on peace and security requires cooperation across the board in the whole United Nations, including on human rights and the Human Rights Council, on fighting poverty and climate change and on international law and courts.

I would like to end by referring to a line from the statement made by my Prime Minister, Mr. Mark Rutte, at the general debate of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly: we should believe in the power of principle, not the principle of power (see A/73/PV.9).

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement to be made by Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed on behalf of the African Union.

First of all, our delegation congratulates the People's Republic of China on having included this very important topical issue for an open debate in its programme of work.

We followed with great interest the important statement made by Secretary-General António Guterres, as well as those made by Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Ms. Inga Rhonda King and Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf.

I would like to begin this statement on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea by stressing that modern international relations must make the effort to track the transformations of the contemporary world, adopting strategies that allow us to assimilate the daily changes in the international community that are occurring. The bilateral system that previously dominated the world, although it has not entirely vanished, feels irremediably incapable of addressing today's global problems. Therefore, coming to its aid and as a new edifice in the global architecture, multilateralism has appeared as an international political system that, in addition to showing its capacity to coordinate national policies among more than two countries, is required to preserve dialogue, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, international equality of States, mutual respect, fair distribution of the benefits brought by joint tasks and respect for biodiversity, inter alia.

The goal of multilateral organizations should therefore be the achievement of global agreements in relation to issues of interest that affect the majority in different aspects of international affairs, such as climate change, trade, peace and security, biodiversity, the Sustainable Development Goals and so on. Accordingly, we must strive to allow the entire United Nations system, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and regional and subregional governmental organizations, inter alia, to function in a democratic and transparent manner, each within its sphere of competence.

With this reform and shift in outlook with respect to multilateral institutions, many of the challenges posed in today's international system, which itself is facing significant changes that in turn have structural consequences, will be responded to and made effective. Some of the changes include the reconfiguration of military forces and their vital missions, the rearrangement of the world economy, and the respective weights that the different nations have in various institutions, including the United Nations, where the power of the veto continues to have an impact on all the important decisions that are necessarily taken within the Organization, which, among other things, allows for a growing body of evidence that the United Nations and its agencies and programmes have a limited role, with the decisions taken being relegated

to a status subordinate to the underlying interests of some countries that have special privileges within the Organization.

Accordingly, reform is urgently needed if the United Nations is truly going to fulfil objectively and effectively its role as the core of the system of international relations based on a principle of multipolarity. A similar exercise should be carried out in all the other international organizations I mentioned, in order to adapt them and make them more transparent, thereby guaranteeing the equality of all their members — in short, to work to democratize multilateral institutions.

In that regard, a plan for profound modifications and reforms to multilateralism is recommended, taking as points of reference the serious problems that currently plague the international community, thereby allowing for the creation of a strong multilateral international system. We note with much regret that, in recent times, we have been seeing not a true multilateralism, but rather a disguised unilateralism in a number of major Powers that have always tried to manage matters of international interest on the basis of their own national interests and through a process of coalition-building, consequently provoking more regional conflicts and armed struggles, to the point of leaving world peace to hang on a very slender thread.

It has been suggested that those countries, aware of their military and technological capacity, should opt for peace and base their international coexistence on the friendly, objective, egalitarian and peaceful character that should be the foundation of the multipolar system that we support in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and in the United Nations. Such an approach would undoubtedly benefit the international community, because with that mere gesture alone many conflicts would be resolved, either as a result of a lack of arms supply or through achieving justice.

Another challenge facing multilateralism is the great divergence of interests and positions within the international system. Defining the terms of action within the organizations that are dedicated to the topic under discussion has proved to be a rather difficult task, especially when we consider what is at stake. That strong contrast of interests has meant that the success of those organizations is measured by their ability to reach an agreement, and not by the true impact of their decisions.

For the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the world of the twenty-first century is too interdependent and complex, to the extent that modern multilateralism requires a new framework of cooperation that, in addition to the inevitable balance of power, takes into account the diversity of the challenges and the need to reaffirm a normative model on a democratic basis. As a firm believer in multilateralism and international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations and other international, regional and subregional organizations, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, has always focused his actions on solidarity within a multipolar spirit, as evidenced by the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, our support for countries that have suffered natural disasters, assistance in the area of food security, support for countries that have fallen victim to pandemics and the fact that Equatorial Guinea has hosted, on several occasions, international and regional forums and international and regional sports competitions.

It is within that same vision and approach that the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, as an elected non-permanent member of the Security Council, consistently advocates for consensus, the peaceful negotiation of conflicts, the total eradication of weapons of mass destruction, respect for the sovereignty of States and respect for humanitarian and human rights, and strongly supports the ongoing multilateral efforts towards peace on the Korean peninsula among the States that are directly involved — the United States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea — with the support of the People's Republic of China.

To conclude, allow me to quote the Ecuadorian political analyst Camilo Zambrano Jáuregui, who stated,

> "Definitively, the focal point for strengthening multilateralism is to generate greater legitimacy of the decision-making processes, be they by procedures or mainly by those institutions called upon to safeguard international peace and security."

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the convening of this debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. We are grateful to Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the quality of his briefing and the relevance of his analysis.

We also express our gratitude to Ms. Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, representing the President of the General Assembly, Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council, and Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, for their insightful briefings.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the African Union.

This debate comes at a time when humankind is undergoing remarkable sociopolitical, economic and scientific transformations, which are sources of hope for our societies and the drivers of our common aspiration for a world of shared peace, stability and prosperity. However, my country also expresses its concern about the gradual erosion of the multilateral order, which is jeopardizing international peace and security. The multilateral order that was born of the lessons of the Second World War is today far from reflecting the enthusiasm and hope generated by the prospective vision of those who drafted the Charter of the United Nations. In that context, it is up to Member States to rekindle the spirit of the Charter, which enshrines multilateralism as an approach par excellence in our common quest for solutions to contemporary challenges.

It is through concerted action that we will together find lasting responses to current challenges, including poverty, youth unemployment, climate change, violent extremism and terrorism. The founding text of the Organization establishes the United Nations a centre for harmonizing the efforts of nations in order to safeguard international peace and stability and, in our day, to enable the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. My country therefore calls on Member States to give priority to concerted and coordinated cooperation frameworks, in which consensual strategies are being developed to meet current and future challenges.

The multiplicity and complexity of the current challenges to peace, security and sustainable development require the pooling of efforts and synergy of the actions of Member States, as well as regional and subregional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. In that regard, the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhancing Partnership on Peace and Security, which was signed on 19 April 2017 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, emerged as a positive example of multilateralism between the United Nations and a regional organization, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

That model of cooperation has even shifted the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union from an ad hoc approach to a more structured and predictable joint approach. Côte d'Ivoire therefore expresses its satisfaction at the outstanding progress made in the operationalization of the Joint Framework, in particular in strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission, as well as regular consultations between the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. My country hopes that that cooperation, based on mutual respect and the comparative advantages of the two organizations, will be further materialized in the specific areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its strong support for the Secretary-General's initiatives aimed at reforming the peace and security pillars of the United Nations and peacekeeping operations. We remain convinced that those ambitious reforms will help to strengthen the role and centrality of our common institution in finding lasting solutions to current problems. In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire wishes to reaffirm its faith in the virtues of multilateralism and constant and constructive dialogue as a means of preventing and peaceably resolving conflicts.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General, the Acting President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the International Court of Justice for the pertinent information that they have presented to us today. We commend their commitment to multilateralism and the United Nations system. Likewise, we express our appreciation to the delegation of China for convening such an important open debate on a matter of vital importance to all States Members of our Organization.

The consolidation of the multilateral system through the establishment and strengthening of the United Nations was one of the great achievements of the international community during the twentieth century, and safeguarding that achievement is one of the great challenges that we face in the twenty-first

century. The multilateral system and multilateralism are indispensable for the realization of the three pillars of the United Nations: human rights, peace and security and development, which make up the backbone of our Organization and are interconnected and mutually reinforcing of one another. The multilateral approach, and in particular the various parts of the United Nations, offers the best means to tackle the major common challenges faced by humankind today, namely, climate change, refugee and migrant crises, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and, in the scope of peace and security, the nuclear threat, the use of weapons of mass destruction, by both State and non-State actors, terrorism, transnational organized crime and extremist rhetoric, among others.

In that regard, the main strength of multilateralism derives from the degree of attachment to, and respect for, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. By contrast, the main threat derives from a lack of attachment to, and respect for, the Charter. The international community must renew its commitment to the implementation of the Charter, while condemning à la carte multilateralism, by which some countries choose — as if from a menu — the aspects of the international system to which they wish to adhere. One cannot advocate for human rights and denounce the main organ of our Organization on the issue. One cannot refer to refugees and migrants as a problem and not participate in the greatest collective effort in our history to ensure orderly, safe and regular migration. Climate change cannot be tackled if the main pollutant is removed from the most relevant agreement on the matter in history.

Turning now to the issue of peace and security, we recognize that there are many complex challenges that the Security Council faces in fulfilling its mandate. However, we believe that the threats that truly jeopardize the efforts of the Council and of our Organization to maintain international peace and security are linked to the insufficient implementation of the mechanisms provided for in the Charter of the United Nations and to the use of unilateral actions, particularly by the major Powers.

As I have underscored, those unilateral actions have led to Government vacuums and weakened the forces of law and order and security. Moreover, humanitarian crises have been unleashed and terrorist groups and irregular combatants have proliferated, finding new spaces to commit destabilizing acts and crimes against humanity. These situations, in turn, now take up the lion's share of the Council's agenda of work. Any measure adopted unilaterally by one State to the detriment of another, with the use of force or other coercive measures, is outside the framework of the Security Council and is therefore illegal and contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, I would like to highlight what former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on 3 September 2013 on the situation in Syria:

(*spoke in English*)

> "As I have repeatedly said, the Security Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security ... That's my appeal, that everything should be handled within the framework of the United Nations Charter. The use of force is lawful only when in exercise of self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and or when the Security Council approves such action. That is the firm principle of the United Nations."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Bolivia categorically rejects the imposition of unilateral measures, since they are a flagrant violation of multilateralism and a serious threat to international order, as they constitute illegal measures that extend the jurisdiction and domestic legislation of one State over another, thereby violating the principles of the equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Another threat to multilateralism that is also linked to the lack of implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter is the instrumentalization of the system and the blurred lines between the mandates and prerogatives of United Nations organs. In order to confront the great challenges to humankind, the various organs and agencies of the Organization must base their actions on the principles of complementarity and coordination, not interference or the duplication of tasks. The Organization is only as strong as the weakest of its organs.

Likewise, with a view to improving its work, the Council should encourage decision-making by consensus, while strengthening dialogue and the effective use of mediation, prevention, conciliation and good offices for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Bolivia believes that, in order to strengthen multilateralism, it is also imperative to work on the reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council. The Council must be more effective, efficient, inclusive and, above all, democratic, while ensuring that its procedures and working methods are transparent and that both its composition and the number of its members are a legitimate expression of the 193 countries it represents — avoiding the regional overrepresentation that perpetuates a kind of institutional neocolonialism and eliminating the prerogative of the veto, which is anachronistic and unacceptable in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, we believe it is essential to create spaces for dialogue, like the one we have today and hope to see again in the future, in order to debate and share positions with countries that may be questioning the benefits of the multilateral system.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): We join others in expressing our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely and important high-level debate. We thank the Secretary-General, the Acting President of the General Assembly and the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice for their briefings.

We also support the statement to be delivered by the Permanent Observer of the African Union, Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed.

We face today unprecedented challenges and threats to global peace and security. The need for multilateralism has never been more indispensable to ensuring a collective response. Of course, at the core of international multilateralism is the United Nations. It has always been an essential platform for advancing collective security and promoting multilateral cooperation among Member States in line with the spirit of its Charter. It has also been an Organization that has faced many challenges. It has had its successes and failures. We can certainly draw lessons from some of its achievements. We should also have the courage to admit its shortcomings and make every effort to redress them.

At the same time, we would all agree that the United Nations is the only indispensable universal Organization we have. Despite all of its faults, it is an Organization that we cannot live without. The question is how we make it more effective, functional and relevant in addressing the challenges and threats humankind faces in the twenty-first century. There is no doubt that the United Nations collective security system has helped reduce the danger of war. It has made enormous contributions to peacekeeping for more than 70 years.

Nevertheless, the global geopolitical landscape has changed tremendously since the United Nations was established. The increasing number of intra-State conflicts, the threats of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as other transnational crimes by non-State actors, are posing increasingly greater risks to world peace and security. The prevalence of poverty and inequality, the spread of pandemic diseases, the impact of climate change and other socioeconomic challenges all have major implications on the security and survival of humankind.

At this juncture in human history, we need the United Nations more than ever before. That is why we need an Organization capable of addressing its own weaknesses. It must have the capacity to make a real difference not only in security, but also in economic, social, human rights and humanitarian areas. That is why the reform of the United Nations is so critical. The Organization must be true to the Preamble of the Charter — that it is the Organization of the peoples of the United Nations. We fully support the reform agenda of the Secretary-General to make the United Nations better able to respond to the needs and aspirations of "we the peoples" that generated the Organization.

The Charter provides for a number of possible tools for the Security Council to address the world problems, Chapter VI of the Charter is clear about the primacy of pacific settlement of disputes and emphasizes the need to take measures to prevent conflicts before they erupt. Chapter VII provides for parameters for action with regard to any threat to peace, breach of peace or act of aggression. Chapter VIII provides for regional arrangements to buttress peace. It is deeply regrettable that we remain unable to take full advantage of what the Charter provides to help overcome the challenges that we face. In effect, that undermines the credibility of the Security Council itself. We hardly need to remind representatives that it is the body that has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is every reason to emphasize the need for reform to start at the top, with the membership of the Security Council. Here, as elsewhere in our efforts to make the Organization fit for the problems of this century, we must also remain

faithful to the principles of the Charter — sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-intervention and peaceful settlement of disputes.

The global concerns and realities of today require us to reaffirm our full commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to multilateralism. They also demand that we muster the courage and determination to rise to that challenge.

Allow me to conclude by underlining Ethiopia's own commitment, as a founding Member of the United Nations and as the largest troop-contributing country, to fully playing its part, as it has done for more than 60 years.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to welcome the initiative of the People's Republic of China to hold this open debate. We wish to thank the Secretary-General for his important briefing, as well as the representative of the President of the General Assembly and the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice.

A country committed to multilateralism, international law and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, Peru underlines the importance and the need to strengthen and renew the United Nations system in order to deal with the serious challenges that today's world poses for the international community.

We see with deep concern the proliferation of conflicts and the emergence of new threats to international peace and security, the root causes of which are in many cases global phenomena such as the growing inequality, the effects of climate change, armament and transnational organized crime.

Today we have an interconnected and interdependent world. It is therefore clear that the poverty and vulnerability of large sectors of the world population have an increasingly direct impact on the security and well-being of all and undermine the pledge to liberate future generations from the scourge of war. Since the end of the Second World War, humanity has significantly evolved and progressed. This Organization has without a doubt served to build a better world. However, in many cases, the progress has been uneven and the international order has shown its limitations in responding effectively to the new and changing realities. Far from weakening multilateralism, the inability of the international community to address such realities should lead us to strengthening the international cooperation required to achieve the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We wish to emphasize the relevance of those purposes and principles and of the Organization in resolving the serious problems facing us and in upholding and developing the collective security system and a rules-based international order, thereby preventing the emergence of greater threats to peace and security.

To that end, we believe it necessary to continue to build on the political, legal and institutional acquis of the Organization. Among other measures, that means moving ahead with the reform of the Security Council in order to adapt it to the current realities and, in accordance with the proposal of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, to make it more coherent, transparent and accountable. It also means renewing our commitment to international law and its continuing development, complying with its provisions, including those issued by the Council, and constructively participating in the respective negotiation and follow-up processes.

The primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security must be exercised with full respect for law and justice. In that regard, we would like to point out the need to promote a more systematic interaction between that organ and the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. We underline the responsibility of the Council to preserve the regimes for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism and the need for its members to remain united in the face of such threats.

We also underscore the need to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement and to commit to the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. We believe that those instruments are fundamental to preventing conflicts and addressing their root causes.

We believe that the Organization should be reformed in order to support Member States in a more coherent and effective way in line to their priorities, needs and national circumstances. In that regard, we would like to express our support for the reforms promoted by the Secretary-General and the emphasis on gender equality.

Multilateralism also means working proactively and inclusively with specialized agencies and entities such as the World Trade Organization, the international

financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations, as well as with civil society, women's and youth groups, the sector private and academia.

Our task is to redouble our efforts to strengthen the United Nations in fulfilling the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter and as a catalyst for cooperation and alliances at all levels, with a view to ensuring that peace and prosperity are available to all.

In that order of ideas, I conclude by recalling former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar when he pointed out that the role of a political institution such as the United Nations is to draw the line between efforts to build a better future and conflict and to make it possible for nations to stay on the right side of that line.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to start by apologizing for my absence at the beginning of this open debate, since I left the Chamber to go to a remembrance service for the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. It is very good — and I thank China — that we are having this debate today so close to that anniversary, which started the march towards multilateralism in earnest even though some foundations had been laid in the previous century. Of course, the end of the Second World War saw the establishment of the United Nations and the Organization as the apex of a system that has, on the whole, kept us all safe and prosperous since 1945.

At the outset, I would also like to say how grateful we are to the United States for giving the United Nations its home here in New York and for its contribution, without which many of the gains of the preceding almost 70 years could not be made. I would like to speak on three themes today: the collective challenges; the special role of the Security Council; and what, in our view, we now need to do to strengthen multilateralism. Public debate on foreign policy issues in my own country nearly always features a reference to the need for a solution to be pursued through the United Nations, no matter where on the political spectrum the comment is made from. Post-Brexit, members will find the United Kingdom an even more active participant in the affairs of the United Nations, and in global affairs more generally.

Seventy years ago, no one could accuse the founding fathers of the United Nations of a lack of ambition. But since its foundation, the United Nations has faced an almost unbridgeable gap between its ambition and our ability to help it deliver. Important gains have been made. Kofi Annan spoke of pushing heavy rocks to the top of the hill, even though some have eluded our grasp, and that we need to keep going. What I want to stress is that, regardless of a country's economic or security model, all the evidence shows that countries thrive best if they have open societies and pursue open trade, open speech, open association and open information. A rules-based international system that preserves stability is in the interests of the vast majority of the States Members of the Organization.

But as many have pointed out today, we face the proliferation of threats from many quarters. We have heard a lot of references to those today: some of them have been the cause of great dispute in the Council, but they are all relevant to the entire membership, whether a Member State is a member on the Council, an elected member of the Council or standing for election themselves. No nation can protect its people without engaging positively in the crises that affect the world. I cannot see a single major threat that can be solved by one nation alone. Whether it be migration, cybercrime, modern-day slavery, terrorist threats, disease or climate change, all those threats challenge security and prosperity at home and challenge collective security on the world stage. They can be resolved only by collective action.

But effective collective action cannot mean only action by consensus. Threats to international peace and security, by their nature, often involve a challenge to international law and norms. It logically cannot be the case that action to uphold international peace and security must always be by consensus: that will not be sufficient. You, Mr. President, spoke of the need for the Security Council to act with unity, wisdom and courage. Our collective wisdom tells us that inaction in the face of gross abuses of human rights and violations of international law, acts of genocide and acts of using prohibited weapons leads to disastrous outcomes. Hence, we fail to uphold international peace and security. Because we lack the courage to act on the wisdom we display, we end up being disunited.

From Rwanda and Srebrenica to current conflicts in Myanmar and Syria, we are failing the cause of multilateralism by failing to act in line with the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council was invested with powers under Chapter VII of the Charter in order to fulfil its duties to maintain international peace and security. But if we are blocked by one or

two members from using those powers, that is not a legitimate expression of the Charter but an abuse of the power of the veto.

We completely share the views of those Security Council members who spoke about the importance of Chapter VI and Chapter VIII of the Charter, relating to the Security Council. To that I would also add Article 99, which we believe is underused: the ability of the Secretary-General to draw matters to the Security Council's attention. But I want to stress that, under Chapter VI, the Security Council may investigate any dispute or any situation that may give rise to a dispute, and may determine whether or not it constitutes international friction and endangers the maintenance of international peace and security. The Charter does not require the Security Council to already agree that such a threat exists. It is our view that some countries try to stop and stifle Security Council discussion of such situations under Chapter VI — for example, when a Government is attacking its own people or abusing its neighbours. The more that Chapter VI is stifled, the more likely it is that dramatic action will eventually be needed under Chapter VII. That is an irony that I think the Security Council would do well to reflect on.

A rules-based international system must of course adapt to thrive. It must also adapt if it wants to survive. A number of speakers today have called attention to the importance of supporting reform. I would like to add the United Kingdom's voice to that as well. I would say that includes Security Council reform. But I think we must also redouble our efforts to defend the rules-based international order. We need multilateral organizations that are fit for purpose, and we need to reform outdated and bureaucratic structures. That is the best way to make sure that the institutions they serve do not collapse. We need reform of the World Trade Organization, so that we succeed in warding off the dangerous temptations of protectionism. And we need World Bank reform so that its governance reflects the changing balance of the global economy. We need to strengthen the invisible chain that links democracies. We must also ensure, at the same time, that we are better at acting in concert when we face real and present threats.

We would therefore attach the highest importance to a renewed and stronger commitment from all members of the Council, as well as all members of the General Assembly, to responsibility and partnership among both State and non-State actors, civil society and the private sector. It is all about what we can do together as we move towards the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations in 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals are the most supreme manifestation of that objective. And it is all the more important as we grapple with new and disruptive technologies, such artificial intelligence or cybertechnology, which will change the way Governments interact with each other and with their own citizens.

While the United Kingdom strongly agrees with the premise of this debate, we know that we must be vigilant against the tendency of this subject to become an exercise in mutual adoration. In conflicts, atrocities are committed and international laws are breached. An increase in the use of multilateralism should never be coded language for negotiating agreements with those who have violated the rules of our international system.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on an issue that is germane for all of us. I also thank the Secretary-General, the representative of the President of the General Assembly and the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice for their briefings.

As many speakers before me have said, this month we commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the end of what was then known as the war to end all wars. India lost 1 million of its population during that war. As we all now know, the war to end all wars turned out to be anything but that. More wars followed, resulting in more devastation and leading to more geopolitical changes.

Multilateralism, as an organizing principle for international cooperation, survived the collapse of the League of Nations, which was established following the end of the so-called war to end all wars. The international adjustments made, in the form of the arrangement

we now have with the Security Council playing a controlling role in efforts to multilaterally address matters relating to global peace, were set more than 70 years ago and have stayed the course. One can say that the experiment of States with multilateralism has grown, as have the interdependencies and interconnectedness of our world, but if we dig deeper, it is obvious that the Security Council is facing manifold crises with regard to performance, credibility, legitimacy and relevance. However, to blame multilateralism for the dismal situation of the Council is, to use a New York sporting analogy, like blaming Madison Square Garden for the failure of the New York Knicks in the National Basketball Association year after year.

Nimble organizations seek to replace routinized procedures with initiatives, continuity with flexibility and rules with results. However, the Council has remained rooted in the historical events that gave birth to it. The Council's path dependence is reflected in its aversion to reforming its membership and working methods. The Council's membership today diverges from the distribution of global power and is unable to accommodate contemporary realities. Also, large sections of global populations are left disenchanted and are nursing a sense of historical grievance owing to the Council's anachronistic composition.

In terms of working methods, even as the Council has spawned an entire range of subordinate bodies, the functioning of that subterranean universe of subordinate bodies has become Byzantine. For example, in place of five members having a veto in formal meetings, all 15 members have been bestowed with a veto in the subterranean universe of the sanctions committees. Furthermore, in an age where informed publics increasingly demand transparency from public institutions, the sanctions committees are the most egregious examples of opacity and the lack of accountability. Those bodies of the subterranean universe are ostensibly acting on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations. Yet, they do not inform us that, owing to a negative vote cast by one of their 15 members, they have decided not to sanction an entity or individual proposed by a Member State.

Even as the task of promoting and maintaining international peace and security has grown more daunting, the Council has been found wanting. It has failed to provide leadership on issues that are contested in spaces that no State controls but that all rely on for their security and prosperity — the global commons. The domains of maritime space, outer space and cyberspace are the principal channels for the flow of goods, capital, data, people and ideas — all of which are key factors in our interconnectedness. They all cry for multilateral solutions. The Council, alas, is missing in action. Therefore, a patchwork of "plurilaterals", "minilaterals" and other regional forums are becoming the venues of convenience, stitching together codes of conduct, ad hoc coalitions of the willing and partnership agreements on issues of global peace and security.

It is time that we renovate, reinvigorate and reform the multilateralism practised by the Security Council. Otherwise, instead of a world at peace, we are likely to see a world order in pieces, even as the welter of piecemeal arrangements extends its sprawl to deliver partial measures of international cooperation and the Council courts obsolescence.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): For the Security Council to discuss the importance of multilateralism in the maintenance of international peace and security can seem like discussing a truism. After all, the United Nations is the embodiment of the very idea of multilateralism. But this is, indeed, an important moment to recommit, and this is an important debate, as we have heard this morning, so we are grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening it.

My statement will focus on the question of the legality of the use of force, but I also want to echo the speakers who have spoken about the importance of discussing the role of the veto and the effectiveness of the work of the Council. I want to reference the code of conduct on mass atrocity crimes in that connection.

The United Nations is the ultimate expression of the rule of law at the international level. A key aspect of the Charter, and therefore a fundamental task for the Security Council, is to enforce the rules governing the use of force. Born out of the desire to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", the Charter has made the use of force illegal, with only two exceptions: self-defence in accordance with Article 51 and the authorization of the use of force by the Council.

In recent years, we have witnessed a widening interpretation by some of which actions qualify as self-defence, without much discussion or consequence. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed the unilateral use

of force without the prior authorization of the Council, and the attempt to expand the rules enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Those discussions have been rather opaque and limited to a small number of States, but there was also a process aimed at codifying the laws and norms on the use of force, a process that was open ended, inclusive and transparent, a process in the framework of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) aimed at developing a legally binding definition of an act of aggression, as well as that of a crime of aggression. Stretching over several years, that process was open to all Member States, including those that had not ratified the Rome Statute. The decision to have a process open to the entire membership was made owing to the overall significance of the effort, not least the work of the Council. Various States, including some assembled at this table today, contributed actively to that effort and supported the consensual agreement on both definitions before the Review Conference of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, held in Kampala in 2010.

Grounded firmly in existing international law, that definition has a number of important features. It establishes a high threshold for a determination that an act of aggression has been committed. Such an act has to constitute a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations by its character, gravity and scale. In other words, being in violation of the rules governing the use of force under the Charter of the United Nations does not automatically constitute an act of aggression, and therefore would not lead to individual criminal responsibility. The crime of aggression, on the other hand, is defined as a leadership crime. Only individuals in leadership positions — military or political, for example — can be held criminally responsible.

After the agreement on the complex definitional issues, States parties also forged a consensus on the conditions for the exercise of the ICC's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. The role of the Council was a crucial aspect in that discussion, owing to the Council's competence under Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations to make a determination that an act of aggression has been committed. The primacy of the Council's role in that respect was never challenged and is fully safeguarded in the Rome Statute of the ICC.

After a successful ratification process and consensual activation decision last December, the Council has had, since 17 July, an additional tool at its disposal to enforce the rules of the Charter of the United Nations on the use of force through its ability to seize the ICC with situations in which those rules have manifestly been violated. We are aware, of course, of the difficult political dynamic in the Council and of its chequered relationship with the ICC in particular, but if the Council is serious about its role as the guardian of the Charter of the United Nations, it now has an additional tool available to enforce a decision on the legality of the use of force.

The importance of that development does not lie in the likelihood of a large number of cases before the ICC. It rests in the ability of every State individually and the Council collectively to benefit from an internationally agreed definition of an act of aggression when engaging in complex decision-making processes on the use of force. Recent trends indicate very clearly that armed conflict between States, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, is an ever more present threat. And, as we heard this morning, the nature of modern warfare is changing rapidly.

The risks of cyberwarfare cast an ever-darker shadow, which makes it a truly burning challenge to thoroughly discuss the international law aspects of those trends. The definitions laid out in the Rome Statute offer the best framework for a discussion on regulating the threats of cyberwarfare. There is no doubt that the global order rooted in international law and multilateralism is under attack today. The Organization is the ultimate expression of the belief in the power of the law. Its continued relevance depends on our ability to further strengthen the rules enshrined in the Charter, to meet the challenges of tomorrow, and to stand up for that belief.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now call on the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by commending China for holding today's open debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. We live in an interconnected and rapidly changing world. As such, we need collectively agreed upon rules and effective

global institutions in order to ensure stability, security, respect for human rights, prosperity and development. A rules-based international order provides a safeguard for everyone, not a constraint. It acts as an enabler for both large and small nations to benefit from a safer, fairer and more sustainable world. Protectionism and unilateralism are not the answer.

The emergence of new multi-level relations means that diplomacy has to be global, regional and local at the same time. The only way to try to manage such complexity is through multilateral frameworks. In a multipolar world, multilateralism is not only a more equal and democratic way to deal with international affairs, but also the only realistic way to address national interests. We Europeans have advanced our national interests over the past 60 years, not in spite of multilateralism, but through it. The European Union is an example of the fact that that approach works as a force multiplier. No State alone is big and powerful enough to address the great challenges of our times. We need an effective multilateral system with a strong United Nations at its core. The alternative would not be the rule of nation States, it would be complete chaos. The alternative to a rules-based order is disorder. The alternative to a rules-based global order is global disorder.

Globalization makes it impossible to tackle challenges in isolation. Our own peace, security and human development inevitably depend on the prospects for peace, security and human development in the rest of the world. For its part, the European Union has learned throughout its history that the only way to be safe, prosperous and strong is to invest in safety, security and prosperity for all. We know that the strength of our neighbours does not represent a threat or a challenge, but rather a guarantee of stability, provided that we all work within the framework of a cooperative and rules-based international order.

We also know that in order for security to be sustainable, it has to be based on human rights, good governance, social inclusion and an understanding of the worldwide impact and negative effects of global challenges like climate change. And we have learnt that sustainable peace always requires a negotiated political solution rooted in some kind of multilateral framework, which will be different from case to case. It also requires the rule of law and accountability. International criminal justice is not only a powerful deterrent against future violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, but is, most of all, instrumental in our efforts to achieve accountability and sustainable peace. The European Union expresses its unwavering support for the International Criminal Court and its strong belief in the legitimacy of the Court. We also know that power lies not only in national Governments, but also in continuous discussion with opposition groups in democratically framed dialogues rooted in norms and principles that are shared by all.

There are a number of contexts where multilateral diplomacy is needed in order to tackle the rise of new threats and benefit citizens around the world, such as free and fair trade, digitization, climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals, ocean governance and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — also known as the Iran nuclear deal — just to name a few. Today, we also see growing threats and challenges to the multilateral system, but we do not see them as representing the demise of multilateralism. On the contrary, they should be interpreted as a call for a better multilateral system with a stronger United Nations at its core. The United Nations is not perfect, but without the United Nations the world would be a worse place. What we need is a stronger United Nations that delivers more effectively in support of our efforts to achieve our common objectives. In that regard, we must work together to improve multilateral mechanisms and support the efficient implementation of the Secretary-General's ambitious reform package, which will make the United Nations better equipped to tackle current and emerging challenges. We believe that today the only way to safeguard multilateralism is to reform it and make it more effective in building peace and security, economic and social development and human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Multilateral cooperation is the backbone of the foreign policy of the European Union, and the promotion of the rules-based global order with the United Nations at its core is at the heart of our interests. In our times, a super-Power for peace must also be a super-Power for multilateralism. The European Union is a reliable, rational and effective global actor that provides the stability and predictability necessary for the international community to move forward. The European Union is a promoter of multilateralism and has become a global player, not least by strengthening its autonomy in areas such as defence and economic sovereignty, but also by observing the rules agreed upon by all and by considering the interests and

concerns of everyone. While words of support for multilateralism are welcome, it is through our actions that we really make a difference. Those who claim to defend multilateralism have a responsibility to do so consistently and not selectively, recognizing that upholding the United Nations-centred multilateral system and abiding by international law are two sides of the same coin.

The global strategy of the common foreign and security policy of the European Union sets out our common strategic vision. We support the multilateral system, and we are willing to join forces with partners who believe that international cooperation can create a better world. The European way is also the United Nations way. That is why we aim to forge partnerships based on an equal footing, thereby strengthening a global network of engagements for multilateralism that reaches beyond traditional bilateral diplomacy and identifies common ground with other international and regional organizations, such as the African Union. The innovative African Union-United Nations-European Union trilateral cooperation is an illustration of that approach.

In conclusion, the European Union strongly supports the United Nations efforts in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and political processes, both politically and in concrete terms. We are also engaged side by side with the United Nations to make peacekeeping operations more effective and deliver lasting peace and development to the populations where those missions are deployed, thereby contributing to sustainable development. We support the efforts of the Council to put more focus on women's participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding. The European Union and its member States strongly support the Secretary-General's initiatives to make the United Nations delivery more effective and efficient on the ground, especially the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, highlighting the need for a stronger focus on protecting civilians, performance and accountability, and improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

We remain a key partner in that endeavour, not only by supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations, but also by deploying our own missions within the framework of our common security and defence policy. We continue to advocate for a better definition of the role of regional organizations within United Nations-led interventions, facilitating — when appropriate — rapid deployment, in complementarity with United Nations operations, as is the case with the European Union training and capacity-building missions and operations within the framework of security sector reform or when our missions are deployed in a bridging capacity. In that regard, we will continue to support the development of African peace capacities, which increasingly contribute to peace and security on the continent.

To conclude, we believe that an extended arm with an open hand, and not an iron fist imposing the will of the strongest, is the best way to find common solutions to common problems and challenges. The European Union is and will continue to be a cooperative global force, one that sticks to its commitments and upholds international norms and a principled partner that puts human rights and sustainable development at the core of its agenda and never ceases to pursue peace, security and economic prosperity for all. And it is in that spirit that we will continue to work within, as well as with, the United Nations and beyond so as to ensure that the future of the international system is based on cooperation rather than confrontation.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I thank the Chinese presidency for convening this very important meeting.

The twenty-first century has presented us with formidable challenges, such as regional and ethnic conflict, poverty, climate change, terrorism, cybersecurity and the abuse of human rights. All of those challenges have something in common — they cannot be solved by any of us alone. Globalization, trade and technological innovation have offered us a prosperous and interconnected world, but one that depends on peace and stability.

Faced with those challenges, we must not be passive. Japan wishes to be proactive in its international cooperation with a view to overcoming obstacles in our way. As a proactive contributor to peace, Japan plays its part. Japan believes that we cannot achieve our nation's own security and prosperity without peace, security and stability in our region and around the world. We are making every effort to promote human security, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals that underlie those situations.

Japan will continue our support for United Nations peacekeeping operations, including by providing

training for enablers, such as engineers and medical personnel from troop-contributing countries, through triangular partnership projects. We will also continue our work in the Peacebuilding Commission to help enhance stability and prevent any relapses into conflict.

As a leading trading and maritime nation, Japan seeks peace and stability on the high seas and in the airspace above. It is on and over those waters that the world's commerce travels. We underscore the importance of open seas and the rule of law as the bases for peace and prosperity. We embrace the international law of the sea, which is based primarily on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, as indispensable for securing our maritime rights and interests, as well as for undertaking maritime activities smoothly. We will continue to make every effort to promote and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific ocean region.

As a forum for collective problem-solving, the importance of the United Nations cannot be overemphasized. Japan strongly supports the reform efforts initiated by Secretary-General António Guterres. The Secretary-General seeks to improve United Nations management, its development apparatus, and its peace and security architecture, and Japan will be a constructive participant in those efforts.

Of course, reform of the United Nations will not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The world has seen enormous changes since 1945, but the Council's composition has not kept pace. The Council must be reformed to reflect the twenty-first century's realities so that it can tackle twenty-first century problems. As Prime Minister Abe said at the General Assembly's general debate in September,

> "[i]n light of the lack of progress in reforming the Security Council, the significance of the United Nations in the twenty-first century world is already being severely questioned" (*A/73/PV.7, p.43*).

In closing, let me reiterate Japan's commitment to multilateral engagement, the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Today's problems can be resolved as long as we are ready to work together to resolve them.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank China for convening this debate on a topic of great relevance to the Organization and to the international community.

In the twenty-first century, it is an illusion to think that States can solve problems of a global nature on their own or in isolation, or even undertake major regional or national transformations. That is so because of the economic, cultural and even technological interdependence in which we live. It is not correct to argue that international organizations function only when external conditions and international relations are propitious. Multilateral forums were created so that nations could develop relations of friendship and cooperation, discuss problems and find common solutions to shared problems on the basis of the legal equality of States and mutual respect.

Multilateral forums, and especially the United Nations, give or withhold legitimacy to the behaviour of States as subjects of international law. They create customs, consolidate norms and forge principles. They do not do away with power relations between States, but they transform those relations by establishing the line that divides civilization from the law of the jungle and chaos.

Those States that, like Mexico, defend multilateralism do so as a matter of principle. Mexico is a State that loves peace and international law, but we also do so because effective and robust global governance is at the heart of our national interests. That is why the confrontation between sovereignty or the primacy of nationalism and multilateralism is a false dilemma. We nations exercise and assert our sovereignty through multilateralism.

The multilateral architecture of the twenty-first century covers almost every aspect of human activities and delivers results on the ground. Like any human construct, multilateralism is perfectible. It could be more efficient, it could produce results more effectively, and it could work in a more coherent and coordinated way. However, the multilateral machinery is the best arrangement that we States have. Attacks on multilateralism, and especially on the United Nations, should not be considered as true or as omens of the disappearance of the Organization. We must not let them breed mistrust.

The United Nations has very clear purposes and principles that seek the good of humankind. Defending the United Nations should be simple. In the face of criticism and attacks, we must analyse their deep

motivation; whether they are driven by the best interests of humankind or seek to harm it; whether they seek to build for the benefit of all or to destroy. Once that is done, we will have some clarity, because, as has been pointed out, the United Nations is perfectible in its operations but not in its ends or its purposes, as they are based on universal and immanent values. We commend the progress being made in United Nations reforms aimed at making the Organization more efficient, effective and coherent in its work in operational, institutional and financial areas. We therefore welcomed the briefing by Secretary-General António Guterres and reaffirm our support for the reform process headed by him.

The Security Council bears the supreme responsibility for preserving both multilateralism and multilaterally agreed norms on the preservation of international security. We need to strengthen that body through a comprehensive reform process in line with the values of the twenty-first century, thereby making it truly representative, democratic, transparent, efficient and effective, and providing the greatest benefit for all, not just for a handful of countries seeking permanent membership. In that regard, we reiterate that the Uniting for Consensus proposal is the most democratic, achievable, realistic and comprehensive proposal available to us for strengthening genuine multilateralism. Similarly, we must continue our work in addressing the working methods of the Organization, especially those of the Security Council. Using the right to veto to block Security Council measures against atrocity crimes runs counter to multilateralism. It is an expression of unilateralism that contravenes the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The French-Mexican initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities is a step towards promoting multilateralism.

We live in a world shaped by multilateralism, and Mexico therefore reiterates its concern regarding the excessive use of the so-called consensus rule, as it is misleading to contend that that rule equates with unanimity or a form of veto rather than a genuine aspiration. A putative consensus undermines the ability of multilateral forums to function effectively and slows progress to a minimal speed, thereby perpetuating the status quo and occasionally making the progress that humankind needs much harder to achieve. Sustainable peace — the new paradigmatic concept of the Organization — has made linking the pillar of peace and security with the pillar of sustainable development into a reality. That effective linkage, which enables us to focus on prevention and to build communities with a healthy social fabric, constitutes a new avenue of work for the United Nations that requires a new and more robust and purposeful architecture, which we must promote and perfect in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Contemporary multilateralism has the best interests of the individual — not simply the avoidance of military hostilities, as was our main concern in 1945 — at its core. The new face of multilateralism is inclusive, with women and girls at its centre, as they must enjoy equal opportunities. The effectiveness of multilateral action will be measured by our ability to improve the lives of our communities by working towards the universal fulfilment of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The new face of multilateralism has been enriched by the participation of civil-society organizations, the private sector, academia and the media, which have found ways to promote issues of interest that have an impact at the local level and to ensure citizens' participation within multilateral spaces.

In conclusion, multilateralism is cannot be called into question just because one or more countries violate the Charter of the United Nations with the threat of the use of force, contravene majority decisions or decide to break international agreements and decide that it is better to act in isolation. Multilateralism would be a dead letter if all other members of the international community were to abandon the purposes and principles that humankind has agreed upon over the past several centuries for the common good and prosperity, or if we were to decide to give up the search for joint solutions to shared challenges, or if we were to consider as normal the selective and conditional compliance with agreements forged by the collective community for the benefit of individual interests.

We reaffirm our unwavering multilateral vocation and commitment to and confidence in the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Bavdaž Kuret (Slovenia): I wish to also convey my thanks to the Chinese presidency for organizing this open debate and to align myself with the statement by the observer of the European Union.

Let me start by expressing our support for Secretary-General Guterres and his call at this year's general debate for a "commitment to a rules-based order, with the United Nations at its centre" (*A/73/PV.6, p. 2*).

Slovenia's commitment to the multilateral system, based on shared values, the rule of law, respect for international law and human rights, remains as strong as ever. Today, we are witnessing rapid changes that are substantial and fundamental. The international community has spent the past 70 years building the system of a rules-based order, which is intended to ensure equal treatment for all and create a better world for nations and individuals. Unfortunately, today's trends seem to be going in the direction of the erosion of that order. We face many new challenges and threats that are more complex and multidimensional and are quickly multiplying, from threats to international peace and security by non-State actors to environmental degradation, as well as possible economic and financial instability. Owing to unprecedented interdependence, no single nation can hold the answers to everything for everyone. Slovenia firmly believes that only through international cooperation that benefits all can solutions be found and progress achieved. One person's gain should not mean a loss to another.

With regard to how we can promote the United Nations role, that should, first of all, be done by insisting on a democratic, international system based on rules, by respecting the Charter of the United Nations, by supporting good governance, sustainable development and gender equality, by respecting the rule of law at all levels, including judicial decisions, and by respecting international law and human rights in every situation. We stand firm in our belief that the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms should be the highest priority for every State and organization.

Secondly, the United Nations is uniquely equipped to discharge its mission both globally and on the ground. That is where the United Nations is the most relevant and closest to the people. To that end, the United Nations should work with reliable partners in regional and subregional organizations. They are present in the environment concerned and are therefore the best partners when addressing situations.

With regard to your third question in the concept paper (S/2018/982, annex), Mr. President, Slovenia fully agrees with the Secretary-General regarding the need for collective answers to existential threats to people and the planet. As we all know, this body bears the greatest responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, and we want it to be efficient and effective and to address all situations that pose a grave concern or threat. Members of the Council have assumed this responsibility and are the ones that need to safeguard this collective mechanism the most. The complexity of today's challenges requires us to work more closely together, be pre-emptive and address issues early on. We believe that conflict prevention is the greatest priority and should be attempted before the international community finds itself having to manage or solve a crisis. Through efficient preventive diplomacy, including mediation, the management and solving of crises could be avoided altogether. Accordingly, Slovenia adds its voice to those who call for the full implementation of the reforms proposed, including reform of the management of the Organization. Only a financially stable and properly managed Organization can be strong, reliable and effective in discharging all the mandates conferred upon it.

Finally, the threats that we are facing today will not be solved by weakening multilateralism. Quite the opposite is true. Those threats are a wake-up call for stronger international cooperation with a strong United Nations at the centre. We simply do not see any other way to do the job that would take into account the needs of all. That is why Slovenia wants once again to express its support for strong multilateralism. We do not think that it is the only choice, but we are sure that it is the best one.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to speak on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Allow us to express our gratitude to the delegation of the People's Republic of China for having convened this debate on such an important subject, especially in the light of the current international situation and the crossroads at which multilateralism seems to find itself. Similarly, we recognize the professionalism with which the delegation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, a State member of our Movement, conducted the activities of this body last month.

The Movement is committed to the promotion of multilateralism and reaffirms that the United Nations, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law continue to be indispensable tools in the preservation and maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, the Movement views the United Nations, the only global body with universal membership and indisputable legitimacy, as the central multilateral forum for addressing global issues and the most pressing challenges facing States today, including those relating to international cooperation for economic development, social progress, peace, security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, human rights, the rule of law, cooperation and consensus-building among States.

In that context, the member States of the Movement reiterate their concern at the growing tendency of some States to resort to the imposition of unilateral measures that undermine the Charter of the United Nations and international law as a whole, and reiterate their opposition to the use and threat of use of force and to the use pressure and coercive measures as a means of achieving national policy objectives.

The promotion and advocacy of multilateral organizations, including the United Nations, as the appropriate areas for solving problems affecting humankind through dialogue and cooperation form part of the guiding principles of the Movement. And, as stated in the concept paper (S/2018/982, annex) prepared for this open debate, we are of the opinion that all of the challenges we face today in an increasingly interconnected world must be collectively addressed in a fair and equitable manner by the entire international community and on an equal footing. Such is our commitment to those efforts that we are currently promoting the adoption of a General Assembly draft resolution to establish the international day of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace.

On the other hand, we express our concern for the victims of and innocent civilians caught in situations involving the use of force or the imposition of sanctions, including those authorized by the Security Council. In the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, we call upon all States to promote the principle of the non-use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes as the means of achieving collective security, and not the threat of force or the use of force, bearing in mind that armed force is not to be used save in the common interest, as stipulated in the Charter of our Organization.

In that regard, we urge the Security Council to make greater use of the International Court of Justice — the principal judicial organ of the United Nations — which has played an important role precisely in promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes and as a source of advisory opinions and interpretations on the relevant norms of international law and on controversial issues, with a view to ensuring the adherence of States in their actions to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In conclusion, the Movement, faithful to its commitment to strengthening its role as an anti-war and peace-loving force, today reaffirms its determination to work for the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable world order. We also renew our determination to work for a multipolar world, through the strengthening of the United Nations and multilateral processes, which are indispensable to our efforts to promote the interests of our nations and humankind as a whole.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, which is very opportune.

Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

The need for multilateralism has never been greater. Yet, the multilateral order is under strong criticism, and its effectiveness is increasingly being questioned, not only by Governments but more and more by the people. The aggravation of social and economic inequalities has undermined public agreement with common rules and shared principles. Multilateralism is seen as unable to find solutions to the world's most pressing problems and, as such, is remote from people's everyday lives. As a consequence, multilateral institutions are often perceived as distant, ineffective and therefore irrelevant.

Ineffectiveness and irrelevance — whether perceived or real — can drive an ever deeper wedge between multilateral institutions and the people they serve. Together, those problems pose an unprecedented challenge to the existing multilateral order. There is clearly an issue of trust, as the Secretary-General underlined this morning — trust of the people in what we do here, but also trust among us. The response should be reform and recommitment.

We must reform the way our multilateral system works in order to make it more effective and relevant to the lives of people across the world. We must recommit unwaveringly to renewed multilateralism as the only way in which the international community can come together to find effective solutions to common problems and global challenges that cannot be tackled by a group of States, let alone by one State alone. They require a common set of rules and a global network of engagements and partnerships based on an equal footing.

Italy firmly believes in a rule-based international legal order. At its core, the United Nations is the primary forum in which we, the peoples, can come together to develop a shared normative framework. Only a strengthened United Nations can be the pillar of an international system that ensures peace, justice, equality and prosperity. The ongoing reform processes are crucial to efforts to improve the United Nations effectiveness and its capacity to reach the goals I have mentioned. Italy reaffirms its steadfast support for the Secretary-General's endeavours, particularly his efforts in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.

We strongly support the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Each of us has a role to play, as does Italy in its capacity as a top troop-contributing country among the Western countries in peacekeeping missions. Italy stands ready to do its part to make United Nations peacekeeping operations more effective and efficient.

A reformed United Nations must continue to operate in the logic of shared responsibility among its Member States and regional organizations. The essence of effective multilateralism is the capacity to reach the widest possible consensus — even on the thorniest of issues — through genuine, inclusive and open dialogue. The Secretary-General spoke this morning of a network of multilateralism. Italy strongly believes in that concept.

I wish to mention three recent examples of our commitment to open dialogue and encouragement for a multilateral approach.

At the end of October, we hosted in Rome, for the second time, the Italy-Africa Ministerial Conference. One of the main outcomes of the Conference was our renewed commitment to a strategic engagement and an all-encompassing partnership with Africa in the context of a strengthened multilateral cooperation framework that includes regional organizations, such as the African Union and the European Union, as well as the United Nations, of course.

Next Monday and Tuesday, Italy will host in Palermo an international conference on Libya, in which all of the relevant stakeholders will come together with Libyan representatives in order to renew the international community's full support for United Nations leadership in the political process. The conference in Palermo is an event for Libya and with Libya.

At the end of this month, we will host in Rome, for the fourth time, the Mediterranean Dialogues, which will consist of three days of high-level discussions on all of the political, economic, scientific, cultural and people-to-people issues of shared interest in the Mediterranean region, with the aim of strengthening multilateral cooperation in such a crucial area for peace and stability in the world.

The Council has a crucial role and a responsibility in strengthening multilateralism. The Council also needs reforms to become truly representative, accountable, democratic, transparent and effective. It is high time to give a concrete chance to all Member States to sit on the Security Council, particularly to those groups of States and regions of the world that are nowadays underrepresented. To achieve that result, we must redouble our efforts to find a consensual solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance. The key concept here is not to enlarge the small circle of the privileged, but to give everyone more chances to contribute to finding solutions to maintain peace and security.

Finally, let me conclude by calling on us, the diplomats — the actors of multilateralism, the women and men behind the scene — to be even more committed to dialogue and to understanding the other's point of view, and in the end, to recommit very strongly to diplomacy itself.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Kleé Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this critical debate, as well as for the concept paper (S/2018/982, annex) that you have provided. We also thank the Secretary-General for his statement and briefing this morning.

It is necessary to recall that the Organization was created to save succeeding generations from the

scourge of war and that those who forget their history are condemned to repeat it. Neglecting multilateralism is tantamount to returning to the era before the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Exactly a century ago, the armistice of 11 November 1918 was signed, which, as the Ambassador of India mentioned, ended the war that was supposed to end all wars. Although the League of Nations was not able to avoid war, that was not an excuse, after the ensuing world war, for nations to obviate the option of maintaining peace through multilateralism, in the belief that the solution to all wars necessarily depends on the collective action of the international community.

Not only is the contemporary landscape complex, but today's world is facing the polarization of ideas, the clash of geopolitical interests, the imposition of interests and the consequent breakdown of trust among Powers and cultures. Peaceful coexistence often fails and human rights are violated due to an incessant struggle to impose spheres of influence or abject domination. When, in recent history, we were able to reach basic consensuses that sustained fruitful alliances and institutions that promoted collective security, it was on the basis of good faith and known truth. Today, on the other hand, the major determinants of international relations that threaten peace are characterized by mistrust, unilateral action and a relative or an alternative reality, as it were, that is built on the basis of post-factual revisionism.

Despite the challenges facing global governance, people organized in States are called by international law to attain international peace and security, and the Security Council cannot abdicate its essential responsibility or be a passive spectator when entire populations are at risk or suffer the violence of war. That is why we must reverse the negative tendencies that separate us and instead foster mutual trust on the basis of an international order based on respect for common rules built on reason, justice and mutual benefit, with the supreme goal of ensuring the common good and the sustainability of the planet.

The defence of multilateralism as an option for addressing and resolving global problems must be preached according to the principle of good faith in the fulfilment of international obligations, since the imposition of unilateral criteria contradicts an international order based on rules that aspire to enjoy sustainable peace, not only from the point of view of the absence of conflict, but also as an expression of the *political will to achieve peaceful and useful coexistence.*

The international order based on a system of generally recognized rules and practices requires Powers to work together, instead of antagonizing one another or competing for influence. It is therefore necessary to re-establish mutual trust among them, as well as the international community's trust in the Security Council. Our common destiny and the survival of the human species require a basic consensus on intrinsic principles, as well as the due observance of human rights, mutual respect among nations and economic progress in freedom, all of which fertilize the progress of nations. To that end, international cooperation is a sine qua non condition and requires scrupulous observance of the tenets of the Charter of the United Nations, which is entered into freely but must be complied with once agreed to.

Beyond theory, multilateralism is praxis and action, and has an evident impact on every inhabitant of the planet. One of the noblest tasks of the Organization has been peacekeeping, which my country is honoured to support. Peacekeeping is a positive strategic partnership among States that, even with large asymmetries, share a common goal. Similarly, conflict prevention through the concept of sustainable peace is another concept that promotes a better world. That is why, despite the imperfections of multilateral initiatives, the United Nations remains the only universal forum where the world converges and the most cherished hope of peoples, not only those afflicted by conflict but particularly those of us that yearn to achieve the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals prevails.

Allow me to conclude by saying that Guatemala deeply values multilateralism and treasures peace. We are witnesses to the fact that in difficult periods of our history, the friendly hand of the international community has enabled us to advance along the path of democratization with social inclusion. That is why we believe that it is not through hostile actions or impositions that we will achieve a more just and secure world, but through cooperation and collective action to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and entrench international security. That public good, as it was called by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom said, which goes by the name of the United Nations, must be at the service of humankind, and that is why it is called on to discharge its duties through solidarity and collective consultations, upon the basis of the greatest *possible consensus.*

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): I sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I also thank you and the Secretary-General for your valuable input and align myself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Multilateralism is an approach to addressing global challenges collectively, pursuing international common goals and goods cooperatively, upholding international law solemnly and applying it to all nations equally. True multilateralism is founded on inclusion instead of exclusion; cooperation in place of confrontation; equality rather than inequality; the rule of law instead of the rule of power; pursuing the common good and long-term objectives of all States, not the short-sighted goals of only one State; and resolving differences peacefully and justly, not violently and unfairly.

To solve global problems, multilateralism is not only one option; it is the only option. It is an option, but not optional. When multilateralism is challenged by bold illegal unilateral actions, we must preserve it, address its threats and promote its relevance and effectiveness. That is essential for a rules-based international order. International law and effective international institutions with universal membership, such as the United Nations, are the core elements of multilateralism. Therefore, in order to preserve and strengthen multilateralism, the United Nations should act decisively. That is how we can make the United Nations relevant to all people.

We fully support the NAM proposal to designate an international day of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace. We need such an annual forum to discuss emerging challenges to multilateralism, the latest of which is the doctrine of withdrawal from international instruments and institutions by a member of the Council. That, among others, has resulted in its withdrawal from the Human Rights Council, UNESCO, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The JCPOA is the result of intensive negotiations to peacefully resolve a manufactured crisis. It was endorsed unanimously by resolution 2231 (2015), which was drafted by the United States. The United States withdrawal from the JCPOA and the reimposition of unilateral sanctions four days ago appallingly violate resolution 2231 (2015) and only defy international law. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, the United States — a permanent member of the Council, with veto power — is penalizing nations across the globe not for violating resolution 2231 (2015), but rather for abiding by it. The world should not allow the United States to pursue its unilateral, arrogant and self-centred policy, which focuses on continuing to reorder the world order to be founded on power, not law.

Additionally, the United States shamefully avoids implementing the recent International Court of Justice order issued, unanimously asking for the immediate removal of United States sanctions. The JCPOA's conclusion and Iran's compliance with its commitments, as confirmed by 12 International Atomic Energy Agency reports, is our contribution to multilateralism. That was commended globally. Iran will continue implementing its commitments proportionate to the benefits it receives.

The world community should strongly condemn and reject the United States sanctions, not only in word but also in deed. That would be an action of pragmatic support for international law and multilateralism

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Brink (Australia): I thank China for convening this debate today.

This is a challenging period for global cooperation. Geopolitical competition, propelled by rapid and accelerating change, as well as rising nationalism, pose powerful challenges to the core tenets of multilateralism. Australia recognizes the reality that great States have a significant role to play in shaping the international system. Australia considers that the world is safer and more prosperous when differences are managed and challenges met by agreed rules, and not by the exercise of power alone.

Australia's 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* contends that there are few issues of greater significance than the continued success of a rules-based international order. By extension, the role of the United Nations is paramount. A rules-based order provides the foundation for our common security and prosperity, including for our region, the Indo-Pacific. It benefits all of us, from the smallest States to the largest States. It plays an important role in managing security challenges, such as the proliferation of weapons and terrorism.

Australia believes firmly that global security and prosperity are best served when countries behave in accordance with international rules and norms; when open markets facilitate the free flow of trade, capital and ideas; when rights of freedom of navigation and overflight are upheld; and when disputes are resolved peacefully, without the threat or use of force.

As an island nation located at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, we place particular importance on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The maritime boundary treaty agreed between Australia and Timor-Leste in 2018 is a testament to the way in which UNCLOS reinforces stability and allows countries to resolve disputes peacefully and without coercion. It is an example of the rules-based order in action. Other examples are the rules-based trading system centred on the World Trade Organization, which strongly advances the prosperity of all members, as well as rules and institutions that promote responses to global challenges like climate change or health security.

The rules-based order also provides the framework for our efforts to support universal human rights. Just as peace and development are mutually reinforcing, respect for human rights is the foundation for peace and security. Indeed, one of the greatest challenges to the rules-based order is posed by States that question the universality of human rights. Australia is committed to a strong multilateral human rights system. We are committed to reforms that strengthen the United Nations Human Rights Council's credibility and effectiveness. We need stronger processes to ensure that Human Rights Council members uphold the highest human rights standards.

Australia also supports Secretary-General Guterres's reform agenda. We see it as a key means to increase and strengthen United Nations effectiveness, and with it multilateralism, to promote sustaining peace and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We welcome the General Assembly's adoption of resolutions on the mutually reinforcing pillars of reform, including on the United Nations development system. But there is more to do.

In conclusion, protecting and strengthening the rules-based order benefits all of us and is a shared responsibility. We must work together to ensure that multilateral institutions are best equipped to engage effectively in the contemporary world.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me start by congratulating China on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month and for convening this very important debate.

In 1945, as the world emerged from the most devastating war in recorded history, it was evident that if the horrors of the past were to be put to rest, international behaviour had to be governed, not by the whims of a few powerful States but instead by a set of universally applicable rules rooted in the firm conviction that no matter how great our strength, we should deny ourselves the license to do as we please and work collaboratively so that our efforts would become more than the sum of their constituent parts.

That essence of multilateralism was encapsulated in the creation of the United Nations. During the past seven decades, the United Nations has remained an indispensable instrument for the promotion of our shared goals of peace, security and development. From the crystallization of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination, to its application in the struggle against colonialism and foreign occupation; from the ideal of the dignity and worth of an individual to the progressive development of instruments to promote and protect fundamental human rights, the United Nations has left an indelible mark in virtually all walks of international life. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the sustaining peace agenda are recent affirmations of that collective approach for the common good and our shared destiny.

Today, as we all know, multilateralism is under assault. Driven by forces of illiberalism and protectionism, jingoism is gaining ascendency over reason, intolerance over acceptance and bigotry over humanity. Consensus-building and compromise are being viewed by some not as virtues of strength but as signs of weakness. The exclusive pursuit of narrow national aims is being promoted as the sole determinant of world affairs. Long-standing legal norms are being eroded; United Nations resolutions and its binding decisions are flouted with impunity; and force is threatened all too frequently. Those trends are not just regressive; they expose the rules-based international order to new dangers.

At a time of increasingly complex and mutually reinforcing challenges, we must be thoughtful and constructive in evolving our response to those new dangers. After all, when seismic shifts triggered by globalization, human mobility, technological advances, terrorism and organized crime and climate change acknowledge neither physical boundaries nor geographical barriers, how can the international community remain divided into silos of narrow interests and divergent priorities, and yet hope to prevail over common challenges?

In our interconnected world, we are all vulnerable if some are insecure. International cooperation is therefore imperative, and it was gratifying to hear the ringing endorsement of multilateralism from world leaders during the general debate of the current session. We must now build on that momentum. The best measure of our commitment to multilateralism is to strengthen the role of the United Nations, for the United Nations will be no less and can be no better than what the membership wants the Organization to be.

A rules-based order, with the United Nations at its core, remains an abiding and fundamental element of my country's foreign policy. Pakistan believes that the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which are based on the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in internal affairs and the pacific settlement of disputes, provide the requisite framework to promote peaceful relations among Member States. The provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter remain equally critical to that end.

True multilateralism entails not only decisions that reflect the diverse array of views and positions on any issue, but also decision-making bodies that are fully imbued with the democratic spirit of our times and representative of the aspirations of all Member States — small, medium and large. Those ideals have served as the foundation stone of Pakistan's perspective for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and will continue to guide our efforts.

The framers of the Charter of the United Nations were no vain idealists in seeking to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. While swords have not been turned into ploughshares, there is no better vehicle than the United Nations to achieve the goals of advancing modern civilization to a new and higher level, assuring a life of dignity for all people and helping to create a more just and peaceful world order.

Allow me to close with the words of my country's founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who famously said that "Pakistan will never be found lacking in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter".

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Santos Maraver (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no viable alternatives to multilateralism. Defending and promoting it, as President of the Government of Spain Mr. Sánchez Pérez-Castejón declared before the General Assembly (see A/73/PV.11), is a clear purpose of our country and our partners in the European Union, with whose statement we align ourselves.

A renewed collective commitment to multilateralism and international law is needed now more than ever. In my statement, I will address three key aspects: first, the responsibility of States; secondly, the value of international norms; and thirdly, the unity of the pillars that underpin multilateralism and the vitality of the Organization.

First, every State has an unavoidable responsibility in facing the common challenges that determine our agenda. Climate change, growing economic inequality, remaining gender inequality, migratory flows, geopolitical friction, terrorism and other forms of violence are, among others, widely shared concerns. No State can or should evade its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations or to the international community. There are no partial or unilateral solutions. The only suitable tools for facing global challenges are global agreements.

Secondly, respect for treaties and the values of international norms are the basic foundations of legal security and stable international relations. In that regard, Spain once again reaffirms its commitment to protection systems for the legal order, in particular for international judicial bodies. The fight against impunity remains paramount. The International Criminal Court is a key institution of the international community, and its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary. With full legitimacy, the Court investigates, establishes responsibilities and punishes the most atrocious crimes. We call once again for its universality and strongly believe that, in carrying out its duties, its full independence must be respected.

I would like to conclude by thanking the People's Republic of China for convening this debate and recalling a third point that we believe to be essential. Security, prosperity and the values that underpin human rights cannot be strengthened separately. As the President of the Spanish Government pointed out in the General Assembly Hall on 27 September, without peace and security there can be no social development or respect for human dignity.

Flagrant and mass violations of human rights and international humanitarian law constitute in and of themselves a threat to international peace and security and must therefore be taken into consideration by the organs to which the Charter attributes that responsibility, in particular the Security Council. Indeed, strengthening multilateralism in the twenty-first century requires reform of the Security Council, with openness to consensus and a broad political vision. Spain, together with numerous other groups of countries, continues to advocate a more democratic, representative and transparent Council.

Everything I have said can be condensed into one single idea — today the international situation requires, more than it did 73 years ago, a strong United Nations. Its role is essential as a forum for dialogue, a broad framework for cooperation and a decisive actor in the global order. In that regard, we express our full support for the reform undertaken by Secretary-General Guterres.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): Let me thank China for the initiative to hold an open debate on multilateralism. The time is always ripe to take stock of an issue that deserves the fullest attention. Indeed, we should ask ourselves how we can uphold multilateralism when it seems to be challenged. Do we believe in multilateralism? More precisely, do we have a common understanding of what multilateralism is? The answers to those questions are not easy to define, but there is common ground that cannot be contested. We, the Member States and beyond, have to take a closer look at the frameworks that we have at hand, of which the United Nations is a strong pillar, a beacon and a cradle for multilateral action.

As indicated in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, it cost humankind two world wars to bring about an instrument aimed at preventing another cataclysm that would annihilate it. There is no better success and faith in multilateralism than the very name of our Organization, the United Nations, which means just that — nations that are clearly united beyond mere membership, acting together for the sake of the whole world.

The United Nations Charter is a precious instrument, but do we really implement its full power? Do we respect the full meaning of its principles and goals? It is clear that after more than 70 years of existence, the United Nations needs to adjust its structures and become more relevant, more efficient and more respected.

There are steps that ought to be taken. In that regard, reform of the United Nations would be an integral part of strengthening multilateralism. Many important issues have lingered for too long. The revitalization of the General Assembly, reform of the Security Council, an increase of the Council's membership and a review of its methods of work would all lead to better efficiency, relevance and credibility and, at the end of the day, to multilateralism.

One of the major tracks to be reinforced is closer work with regional organizations. In that vein, we salute the cooperation and coordination that exist between the United Nations and the African Union, and we strongly urge its strengthening.

Addressing the issues still at stake also lies in perceiving the United Nations through a lens of efficiency in resolving regional conflicts. For every tremendous success of the United Nations, as in Namibia and Timor-Leste, how many failures are unjustifiably placed on the United Nations shoulders. Clearly some issues, such as the question of Palestine, have haunted the agenda of the United Nations since its founding, but that failure cannot be seen but as a failure of multilateralism. Regional conflicts old and new are constant litmus tests that hover over the United Nations and multilateralism. But are we not all equally responsible for those failures? If we stick to the letter and spirit of the Charter, some Members, especially here in the Council, have specific duties that they cannot ignore.

Multilateralism also means protecting the lives of every human being on Earth and the necessity to promote their well-being. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and what it encompasses — namely, our common responsibility and solidarity and the very

idea of no one being left behind and the eradication of poverty — are also tests of and for multilateralism.

No one can secure their own well-being if they ignore the well-being of others. No one can be safe if all are not safe. The questions of climate change, migration and terrorism are global and require global and coordinated action. This is therefore a strident call for multilateral action and solutions, in which big and small and the powerful and not so powerful must think together, work together and act together with mutual respect and shared responsibilities.

I wish that we could draw some optimism from those who inspired the United Nations Charter while the Second World War was not yet finished. All their values, principles, goals and mechanisms created an inspiring momentum that, unfortunately, narrow visions later impeded.

To us, multilateralism and patriotism are not contradictory and should not be opposed to one another. Our world, this global village, cannot sustain being disenfranchised or excluded. If we are to be forced to accept that, then we will end up with beleaguered citadels where the besieged and besiegers live not in tranquillity but in dubious confrontation. Hurricanes know no borders; neither does sunlight. There is one way to alleviate hurricane damage, rebuild what is destroyed and have sunlight shine on everyone — that is precisely through multilateralism.

Let me conclude by appealing to you, Mr. President, to achieve an outcome of this open debate that is in the best interests of our records and history.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): I would like to congratulate your country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency this month and convening this open debate. The theme of the debate is indeed timely and crucial in the light of the growing geopolitical challenges with which we are faced.

The current multilateral system was imposed on us as a consequence of war. Seventy-seven years ago, on 9 June 1941, the allied representatives of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia met in St. James Palace, London. They declared that

> "[t]he only true basis of enduring peace is the willing cooperation of free peoples in a world in which, relieved of the menace of aggression, all may enjoy economic and social security. It is our intention to work together, and with other free peoples, both in war and peace, to that end".

In 1945, 50 nations, including South Africa, formed the United Nations and collectively agreed to the Charter of the United Nations. The aspirations set out in the Charter are more important today than ever before. The increased threats to multilateralism undermine the principles to which we subscribed over 70 years ago, when the Organization was established. The complexities of conflict have evolved, and we are increasingly more interdependent as nations. That means that we are all affected in some way by conflicts that we might have thought were far away from us. The world is a significantly different place to what it was when the United Nations was founded, and the need for multilateral approaches to address our common challenges is even more necessary and pertinent today.

South Africa, like many other countries, has benefited from the support of the States Members of the United Nations, which, through the Organization, were able to mobilize the international community to help isolate and defeat the apartheid system. The United Nations was a beacon of hope that contributed to the transformation of our country. For that, we remain grateful.

Two months ago, during the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit of the General Assembly, our leaders reaffirmed their commitment to global peace, in honour of and to revive the values that leaders like Nelson Mandela stood for, by placing human dignity at the centre of our actions. They made a strong call to safeguard multilateralism, in recognition of the new challenges and threats that our nations face. Emerging threats to peace and security can threaten any nation, no matter how stable and prosperous it may be, and a coordinated and global response is needed to overcome those threats. Through the political declaration adopted at the Summit (resolution 73/1), our leaders committed to redoubling their efforts to build a just, peaceful, prosperous and inclusive world. It is critical that we respect, safeguard, enhance and implement the multilateral agreements constructed around the pillars of development, human rights, peace and security.

We recognize that the Security Council remains the primary multilateral body charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. However, the Council has been confronted with challenges where it has been prevented from acting due to structural impediments that, at times, undermine its ability to promote conflict prevention and protect the most vulnerable. It is therefore imperative that the Council continue to be united and steadfast in realizing its multilateral commitment to achieving peace and tangible dividends for vulnerable people on the ground. The Council's central mandate should not be undermined by narrow self-interest, which is the antithesis of multilateralism. Rather, it should draw on its strength of unity and diversity of perspective in finding real, proactive and viable solutions to threats to international peace and security.

It is vital that the Security Council continue to work closely with regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. That is fundamental in the light of the significant strides that have been registered in the continuously growing relationship with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations — particularly between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council — in support of a home-grown peace initiative. In that regard, we should ensure that the relationship is enhanced and becomes mutually beneficial to the aspirations of collective security, as well as to silence the guns on the African continent, as stated in the AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Furthermore, we should act with determination in reforming the Council to ensure that it reflects current geographical realities and is fully representative of the peoples of the world today. In that context, we should redress the historical injustice against the 1.2 billion people of Africa. Similarly, improving the working methods of the Council would enhance the effectiveness of the work of this important body.

Efforts aimed at creating an enabling environment through the prioritization of conflict prevention cannot be overstated. Consequently, addressing the root causes of conflict will enable us to better address issues related to terrorism and migration, among others. The absence of overt conflict, however, is not an end in itself, and peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development are essential. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is therefore key, as it aims to address poverty and development and lays the foundations for achieving sustainable peace.

In closing, we would like to reiterate the sentiment of the political declaration adopted at the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, which captures the essence of multilateralism.

> "It is clear that lasting peace is not realized just by the absence of armed conflict, but is achieved through a continuing positive, dynamic, inclusive participatory process of dialogue and engagement that resolves all outstanding issues in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding, cooperation and long-term vision". (*resolution 73/1, para. 20*)

It therefore supports what South Africa firmly believes — that the only route to a just and lasting peace is through multilateralism, which is exemplified by the achievements of the United Nations. Like many others, the African way is a multilateral way.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank China for convening this open debate of the Security Council on the theme of strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. It is indeed an issue that concerns international peace and security.

This debate could not be more timely. It is taking place in an increasingly complex and difficult international and regional context, at least for our region, with the resurgence of conflicts that we thought we had laid to rest; new dimensions of terrorism and extremism; cybercrime; extreme poverty in a globalized world; ethnic division in a world experiencing an exponential growth of information technologies and communications; climate change, certain aspects of which represent an existential threat for many countries; a weakening of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime; rising nationalism, and so on.

With all of those challenges, it is clear that we are truly at a crossroads of our destiny, where all options, even the most extreme, stand out in stark relief. More than ever before, we need the multilateralism that is embodied by the United Nations, which is neither an option nor an alternative but our only path to salvation.

As is clearly emphasized in the concept paper before us (S/2018/982, annex), the path to peace and

stability is long and arduous. We are aware of that. Let us translate into reality the common aspiration and firm will expressed today in this forum to safeguard the gains we have fought long and bitterly to achieve, strengthen multilateralism and ensure that the United Nations voice rings louder than that of nations. How can we better safeguard multilateralism in the light of current challenges? That question is legitimately posed in the concept paper and raises questions on three levels.

First, the central role of the United Nations is constantly underlined as a reminder that the system, which was built by the ancestors of some among us, and which we subsequently joined, remains at the heart of global governance. Its scope for action, based on consultation, dialogue and negotiation, fosters a perspective that seeks to capitalize on consensus in order to achieve collective, sustainable and realistic partnerships. It is in the interests of us all to safeguard and build on those achievements, because we have enjoyed successes and will enjoy more.

Secondly, the three pillars of the Secretary-General's reform, particularly that of peace and security, rightly respond to the need for a holistic review of the functioning of the Organization. Tunisia has strongly supported that necessary reform process. Our Organization must resolutely rethink its working culture and methods. We believe that we are heading in the right direction to achieve our ambitions.

Thirdly, it is generally accepted that the viability of a collective security system is intimately linked to the development of peoples — economically, socially, culturally and so on. It must be remembered that one of the purposes of our Organization, according to the Charter of the United Nations, is the recourse to international institutions to promote the economic and social progress of all peoples. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are, without doubt, the main catalyst for lasting peace. Development cannot, in fact, be conceived sustainably without multilateralism, which is also true for lasting peace.

It is clear that the collective actions of the international community must be rooted in regional responses. If necessary, the dynamics of medium- and small-scale negotiations must be deepened, reinvented and institutionalized. The United Nations must be the champion in that regard. We welcome the fact that, at the African level, there has been an annual dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union since 2017. The existence of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security reflects the revitalization of the instruments of cooperation between the two organizations. Such action is timely as the African Union is beginning its own reform process to refocus our regional organization on key priorities that affect the entire continent and its institutions.

In that regard, I would like to express Tunisia's appreciation for the holding of the second annual African Union-United Nations conference and the recent meeting in September of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security. Those actions can only further strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention and management, of course based on its three pillars.

The dividing line between regional peace and international peace and regional security and international security is no longer relevant, as they are all intrinsically linked to each other. That is why we continue to believe that peace in the Near East and the Middle East is a decisive factor in international peace. The achievements and efforts of the United Nations in the region must be capitalized on, because they reflect and express international legality.

Tunisia continues to believe that the only viable and sustainable way to address challenges of peace and security is inclusive dialogue. We have made that our rallying cry at the international level, especially following our accession to the United Nations, when we advocated that approach to the resolution of conflicts, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and we continue to advocate it today as the only way to peacefully resolve conflicts, including the Libyan crisis.

Tunisia is an emerging democracy, recognized for its consensus-based approach, which has enabled it to strengthen its capacity to overcome difficulties and meet challenges. As Africa's candidate for the Security Council for the 2020-2021 term, Tunisia will act on behalf of the international community and honour its commitments by incorporating the objectives and principles of the Charter and the close correlation among peace, security and sustainable development. Our success, however, depends on the extent to which our collective influence and its mechanisms for action can be multilateralized.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Favre (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate.

At a time when many items on our agenda may divide us, we should remember what unites us. The central institution of our multilateral system, the United Nations, was built on the conviction that future generations must be saved from the scourge of war. The Charter of the United Nations remains the common denominator and the starting point for our ongoing dialogue. It envisages friendly relations among nations and international cooperation to solve international problems. It commits all Member States to settling their international disputes peacefully.

We have achieved important milestones during the past seven decades. That is illustrated, for example, by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. However, the challenges facing the international community have not decreased over the years. A strong multilateral system therefore remains as important as ever.

Like every good relationship, multilateralism needs the continued engagement of all States. As a federal State, Switzerland is accustomed to building bridges across different political perspectives, cultures and languages. It is therefore second nature to us strive actively for a strong, rules-based multilateral system. Geneva hosts the second United Nations Headquarters, which is the operational heart of the multilateral system. Furthermore, Switzerland has a tradition of providing good offices to conflicting parties and platforms for international peace talks. The launch of the Secretary-General's agenda for disarmament in Geneva is therefore no coincidence.

Houses are built on columns, while multilateral systems are built on institutions. It is vital that we do not turn our backs on the multilateral institutions that we have built together, from the Human Rights Council to the World Trade Organization and the International Criminal Court. Supporting strong institutions also means ensuring a strong United Nations that is fit for purpose and able to respond to current crises.

It is necessary for the United Nations to be able to create better conditions on the ground. We are convinced that the Secretary-General's reforms will help the United Nations to work in a more integrated manner across the three pillars — peace and security, development, and human rights. These reforms will enable the United Nations to address current challenges and act more effectively, particularly with regard to the sustainability of peace.

This brings me to my last point — the role of the Security Council. The Council has the primarily responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. In particular, Chapter VI of the Charter provides it with important tools to ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes and to contribute as well to conflict prevention. As Coordinator of the interregional Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group and one of the Chairs of the Human Rights and Conflict Prevention Caucus, based in New York and Geneva, Switzerland is committed to continuing to support the Council in the effective use of these tools.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): Let me too begin by commending the Chinese delegation for its initiative to convene today's open debate on this important topic and by thanking the Secretary-General and the other briefers for their enlightening presentations.

Seventy-three years ago, the founders of the United Nations came together to sign the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrines their strong commitment to save future generations from the scourge of war, protect human rights and dignity, respect international law, and promote social progress and better standards of life. Yet today's reality is a far cry from what the founders of the United Nations envisioned. Protracted armed conflicts, large-scale human rights abuses, and complex cross-border problems such as terrorism and human trafficking are just a few of the challenges we face today. And amid the slow progress in the international community's efforts to address these challenges, multilateralism and the United Nations are viewed with increased scepticism and suspicion. Critics are asking whether the complexity of today's challenges, along with polarization and inequality among and within nations, have outduelled the Organization and our collective will to realize the goals set forth in its Charter.

Indeed, multilateralism is under fire. However, none of these criticisms means that we should go back to the days when the United Nations did not exist. On the contrary, the United Nations must stand up to the challenges. What is called for is not a perfect,

but more relevant United Nations. That is why for the past two years we have dedicated ourselves to pooling our wisdom with a view to creating a reformed and reinvigorated United Nations. While reaffirming our full support for the Secretary-General's reform initiatives, I would like to highlight a couple of points that I believe are important in our collective efforts aimed at strengthening multilateralism and making the United Nations more relevant.

First, the United Nations must make better use of its convening power. The United Nations is the only organization with both the legitimacy and capacity to bring knowledge and resources of the international community together to tackle global challenges. The convening power of the United Nations is all the more relevant today with the increased role and visibility of non-State actors. From mobilizing financial resources to seeking collective solutions to complex challenges, the United Nations should leverage its convening power to bring relevant actors together. The reason why the Action for Peacekeeping initiative is so widely supported is because its key goal is to bring together all partners and stakeholders in supporting United Nations peacekeeping operations. As Secretary-General Guterres rightly pointed out, the resources are already out there. The question is how to connect the dots.

Secondly, we must identify and magnify the successes of multilateralism and build upon what has proven to be effective. From the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, multilateralism has time and again proved its ability to achieve ground-breaking successes. And, most recently, multilateralism helped to bring the Korean peninsula back on the road towards peace. The unity of the Security Council in particular has played a critical role in this regard. As we continue to work towards the complete denuclearization and permanent peace on the Korean peninsula, we count on the Council remaining united in supporting the ongoing process of negotiations towards a diplomatic solution, while faithfully implementing the relevant resolutions in place.

In our collective efforts to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, we must benefit from the wisdom of Winston Churchill, who is reputed to have said, "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty".

The Republic of Korea is a country whose very existence is a living testament to the relevance and competence of the United Nations. Had there been no help from the United Nations from the time of its foundation to the Korean War and in the post-war reconstruction, the Republic of Korea as it stands today would not exist. We are therefore committed to playing a greater role in rebuilding confidence in multilateralism and the United Nations, drawing upon our unique experience of simultaneously achieving industrialization and democratization. To this end, we will focus mainly on the following three roles.

The first role we can play is that of facilitator. In the process of transforming itself from a war-stricken agrarian society to an industrial powerhouse with a vibrant democracy in a span of half a century, the Republic of Korea has earned a good reputation and the trust of the international community. It is therefore uniquely positioned to play a role as a bridge in facilitating communication and cooperation among relevant actors, including developed and developing countries. A case in point is our role as one of the Chairs of the Group of Friends on Peace Operations, together with Norway and Ethiopia. We are committed to playing a role as a facilitator or interlocutor in other areas as well, wherever we deem it necessary or appropriate, in order to help move the multilateral process forward.

The second role we can play is that of supporter. Having overcome all the challenges and constraints associated with being an aid recipient to then join the ranks of full-fledged donor countries, the Republic of Korea, more than anyone else, appreciates and understands the difficulties that developing countries face in their journey towards socioeconomic and political development. We will use our experience as a valuable asset in supporting developing countries, especially those in transition, as well as fragile States, in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace and development. Such efforts will not be confined to sharing our experiences on a bilateral basis, but extends to multilateral arenas, as we did in our contribution to reinvigorating the role of the Peacebuilding Commission as its Chair last year.

The third role we can play is that of initiator. With so many successes and failures in its quest for economic prosperity and political stability, the Republic of Korea has learned a number of precious lessons. It is therefore better poised to have a balanced perspective on many of today's emerging issues and global challenges. From

the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and to new technologies, the Republic of Korea will continue to seek a constructive and more proactive role, initiating and advancing new agendas for promoting global peace and security.

As former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once reminded us, the United Nations was created not to take humankind to heaven, but to save us from hell. Undoubtedly, the greater the challenge is, the bigger the need is for a strengthened role of the United Nations and multilateralism. The Republic of Korea will remain firmly committed to working closely with all stakeholders within and outside the United Nations towards this end, playing a role befitting a country of its stature.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for convening today's open debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations as an issue that is ever important and topical against the backdrop of current global challenges. Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

The international challenges of the twenty-first century have become more complex, transnational and multidimensional. To overcome these intertwined and interrelated issues, a coherent and holistic response by the international community is needed. We must demonstrate not only that collective international action works but that it is also in all of our best interests. Estonia is committed to promoting the respect for international law and a rules-based international order. For us, international law is an existential matter. It is of utmost importance that we make full use of all the instruments and that we act with full responsibility in preventing and ending conflicts. In order to make the whole system work, every country has to play its role.

In that regard, we strongly support the Secretary-General's reform efforts to make the United Nations more responsive, effective and modernized in order to be more capable of dealing with today's challenges. Making an effort to increase the transparency and accountability of the United Nations system should be part of our ambitions. Helping to make good progress on all three main strands of the Secretary-General's reform agenda is by far the best way in which all of us can make a tangible contribution to strengthening a multilateral, rules-based international system.

Although in recent times we have been witnessing growing disunity and disagreements on a number of topics, it is clear that the international community needs the Security Council to uphold and promote international law by responding decisively to grave violations of international law, including that of humanitarian law and human rights law. We need to keep up our efforts to strengthen the legitimacy of the Security Council resolutions and their implementation. If we want the Council to fulfil its purpose of maintaining international peace and security, its practices need to be updated so that it is not hamstrung by the use of the veto, especially in the case of atrocity crimes.

Modern conflicts threatening international peace and security are characterized by the ever-broader use of new technologies. Being ready to adequately respond to those kinds of new challenges is important if we want to ensure that the United Nations peace and security architecture stays relevant in times of a dynamically evolving international environment. Estonia is firmly of the position that crimes have to be prevented, investigated and prosecuted, irrespective of the way they are committed, be it by using kinetic force or cyber means. International law is applicable when cyber means are used to threaten international peace and security. It is our view that the Security Council can and should use all powers deriving from the Charter of the United Nations to take action in such cases.

To conclude, as the saying goes, listening well is as powerful as talking well and is as essential to true conversation. We should learn from those wise words in order to strive for deeper cooperation and empathy, both within the Security Council as well as with the wider United Nations membership and other actors. Estonia stands ready to engage in that partnership to better uphold international law and maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Council for taking the initiative to convene this debate, as well as for the special emphasis placed on the question of strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security in the face of the

emergence of new challenges and threats. We are also grateful for the briefings by the Secretary-General; Ambassador Al-Thani on behalf of the President of the General Assembly; Ms. Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council; and the President of the International Court of Justice.

Argentina firmly believes in the value of multilateralism and the fundamental role that the United Nations can and should play in the maintenance of international peace and security in order to generate and maintain a stable and inclusive global order based on the pillars of peace, sustainable development and human rights. The global order we aspire to build begins with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which gave rise to the Organization more than 70 years ago and are now more applicable than ever before.

Protecting the rules-based international order was and is a shared responsibility, and the maintenance of international peace and security is increasingly threatened by serious new challenges such as organized crime, cybercrime and terrorism, which require effective and efficient responses based on dialogue, consensus, cooperation and multilateralism, which no individual State in the international community is able to provide on its own. In that regard, today more than ever the role of leadership is fundamental to protecting and maintaining the international order that we have been able to build over the past decades, in order to achieve peaceful, inclusive, equitable and sustainable societies.

One pillar of multilateralism in the international order is conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In that regard, the support of the United Nations in seeking peaceful solutions, in accordance with international law and the parameters established by the Organization, represents a valuable contribution to a more just world. In that context, we emphasize the power of the General Assembly, the most democratic and representative organ of the United Nations, to make recommendations for the maintenance of international peace and security, including by granting a mandate to the Secretary-General to mediate or exercise his good offices with the parties to any dispute.

In that regard, my country deems it relevant to stress that the ability of any mediation effort, mission of good offices or other means of peaceful settlement to achieve its goal and purpose depends on compliance in good faith with the obligations incumbent on the parties to those procedures. When called on to negotiate by the organs of the United Nations, the parties involved must do so in good faith, refraining from acts that could hinder their obligation to settle the dispute by peaceful means. Likewise, States that are not parties to a dispute must contribute to its peaceful resolution and abstain from any conduct that could frustrate the settlement of the dispute. All of that is also part of a genuine commitment to multilateralism.

Likewise, we would like to highlight the value of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The development of multilateralism at the regional level has also proven to be highly effective in the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In the framework of the Charter, the International Court of Justice plays a central role as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. In that regard, at the international level the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is one of the most significant achievements of multilateralism and plays a central role in the fight against impunity. Consequently, it constitutes an essential element of the rule of law at the international level, and we therefore advocate for its universality, reaffirming the prevalence of law and justice over force in international relations.

Similarly, Argentina commends the efforts of the Organization to develop capacities and provide support to Member States in order to strengthen multilateralism based on the rule of law. My country values the use of South-South cooperation as an effective and efficient tool for capacity-building and the exchange of experiences acquired in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion of justice.

Finally, we believe that the implementation of the shared responsibility to strengthen multilateralism should include the reform of the Security Council in order to make it more democratic, representative, transparent and effective, which would undoubtedly contribute to the strengthening of the multilateral system and the role of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security. To that end, we believe that we must redouble our efforts to reach a solution based on consensus with the highest possible degree of political support.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Singapore.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I have the honour to address the Council on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in today's open debate.

I wish to begin by thanking China for convening this open debate on the very important topic of strengthening multilateralism. The United Nations is the ultimate global institution for multilateralism, where nations large and small interact with each other on the basis of sovereign equality. It is therefore appropriate and timely that we are discussing the topic of multilateralism in the Security Council. The Security Council has a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, the members of the Council have the special responsibility to be custodians of multilateralism and guardians of the multilateral rules-based system. In particular, the permanent members of the Security Council have a duty to strengthen multilateralism, and to not weaken it, through their words and actions.

In the past seven decades, the United Nations has been an important pillar of the multilateral architecture by providing a forum for dialogue and cooperation. More importantly, it provides a framework of rules and norms that governs the behaviour of countries. That rules-based framework, which we have built painstakingly, has brought peace, security and sustainable development to all our peoples.

However, there is no doubt that today, multilateralism is at a crossroads. In fact, there is a clear sense that multilateralism is under siege, as evidenced by the large number of speakers we have today. In his remarks to the General Assembly at the opening session of the high-level week, the Secretary-General spoke of a crisis of confidence in multilateralism (see A/73/PV.6). As he put it, there is a "trust deficit disorder", especially among the major players. The lack of trust and the polarization that we are witnessing among members of the Council are not new. However, they come at a time when the world expects members of the Council to work closely together to resolve global issues and transnational problems.

The lack of trust among the major players has also affected the rules-based multilateral trading system, of which the Word Trade Organization is an important component. In ASEAN, we are deeply concerned about the spectre of a prolonged trade war that could seriously damage global economic prospects. While we must adapt and reform the global trading system, unilateral actions cannot be the solution. Unilateral actions only serve to undermine the multilateral trading system that has underpinned global prosperity for decades. Ultimately, all of us will be worse off if the current rules-based multilateral trading system is damaged or destroyed.

ASEAN has been actively promoting political security dialogue, economic integration and people-to-people links. Regional organizations like ASEAN complement and reinforce the work of the United Nations in areas such as peace, security and sustainable development. However, if regional organizations are to be successful, they must operate in a world that is governed by a rules-based multilateral system. When the multilateral system and the United Nations are vibrant and healthy, regional organizations like ASEAN can thrive and prosper.

For over 50 years, ASEAN has put in practice the principles of a rules-based multilateral system. Through dialogue and consensus, ASEAN has established a framework to manage our differences and helped to build peace and mutual trust in our region. ASEAN's success is testament to the fact that we need more multilateralism, not less, to overcome the challenges that confront us today.

If multilateralism is to be effective, we need to reform and strengthen the United Nations. To that end, ASEAN members have been strong supporters of efforts to reform the United Nations and make it more fit for purpose. ASEAN countries have played an active and constructive role in the three pillars of the United Nations reform process. We were the first region to universally endorse the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. ASEAN members now rank among the largest troop- and police-contributing countries.

The United Nations remains the torchbearer of multilateralism. All of us here have a duty and responsibility to defend what we have built together. More importantly, we have a duty to adapt and reform the multilateral system to build a better future for all.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the observer of the African Union.

Ms. Mohammed: On behalf of the African Union (AU) Commission, allow me to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on assuming

the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to thank you for convening this very important debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations.

It is indeed a very commendable initiative of your delegation to convene this discussion at a time of unprecedented and serious threats to the international multilateral order. In that regard, the rising tide of nationalism and exclusionist tendencies, the emerging pattern of unilateral actions, as well as the deepening rifts in international relations, have already had serious implications for the fulfilment of existing norms and established practices of international law. Furthermore, the declining commitment towards the United Nations and its different agencies, including when it comes to fulfilling incumbent financial obligations, is very indicative of the current turmoil that the international multilateral order is going through.

In the face of that crisis, the international community must voice its concerns and reiterate its commitment to a rules-based system, which remains the best and safest way to enhance cooperation and address global issues of peace and security. It is only through strong multilateral institutions that we can collectively tackle the global challenges we are currently facing, transcend all sorts of differences among our respective societies and achieve the greatest possible benefits for all.

The African Union, which is deeply committed to multilateralism and respect for international law, will spare no effort to overcome the current crisis and preserve the multilateral system. Africa has always supported existing international norms and the genuine process of the codification and progressive development of international law to promote friendly relations between Member States and the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts. On that note, permit me to underline the following key points.

First, the importance of strengthening the Organization's leading role in coordinating international responses to the world's most pressing challenges cannot be overemphasized. The past 70 years since the creation of the United Nations have witnessed substantial gains that should be recognized and defended. We need to reaffirm the validity of the Charter of the United Nations and strengthen our collective commitment to observing its provisions, in particular when it comes to the use of force in international relations.

Secondly, we ought to acknowledge the pressing need for reforms. In that context, the African Union welcomes the ongoing reforms that have been initiated by the Secretary-General to enhance the performance of the United Nations in the most visible areas of action. In addition to that, every effort should be made to conclude the long-stalled Security Council reform process to better reflect the geopolitical realities of our present world and correct the historical injustice done to the African continent. We strongly believe that adequate representation of an entire continent, to which the Council devotes approximately 70 per cent of its work, is fundamental to ensuring the legitimacy of the Council's decisions.

Thirdly, The African Union's commitment to multilateralism is also illustrated by its growing strategic partnership with the United Nations. I welcome the progress achieved so far, including the conclusion of two landmark frameworks for enhanced AU-United Nations partnerships in peace and security and sustainable development, respectively. We have also embarked on the work to amplify that partnership through broader arrangements comprising other actors, including the European Union, the League of Arab States, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Undoubtedly, multilateralism is also about building strategic partnerships based on mutual respect, solidarity and adherence to the principle of comparative advantage.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate the African Union's commitment to advancing multilateral cooperation and to working constructively with its partners towards addressing the current threats to peace and security in line with its long-standing policy of conflict prevention, mediation and enhanced peace support operations. The ongoing reform process of our Union will hopefully chart the path that will enable us to transcend our weaknesses and promote efficient and effective mechanisms and tools to carry out the ambitious agenda of achieving a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Mrs. Bogyay (Hungary): Hungary aligns itself with the position expressed by the observer of the European Union. Allow me to add some further remarks in my national capacity. We would first like to

thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate.

According to an old saying in Hungary, those whose death is falsely claimed will live long. The multilateral system and the rules-based international order established after the Second World War endure, and our work here at the United Nations is a testament to that. Nevertheless, one cannot hide the fact that the multilateral order and the United Nations itself are under pressure from emerging or recurring challenges and need to adapt. Reform of the United Nations is inevitable. Hungary shares the view that the current transformational changes that the Organization is undergoing have the potential to make it more able to deliver on its mandate, thereby contributing to enhancing multilateralism.

We are pleased to see that some parts of the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda have already entered into the implementation phase, and we hope that the remaining elements will soon follow. Since we are in the Security Council, we must not forget that the reform of this principal organ of the United Nations is also long overdue. The modernization of the United Nations cannot be complete without adapting the main executive body of the United Nations to the challenges of the twenty-first century. Besides the commitment of the new leadership of the Organization, Member States themselves must also be ready for the change at the United Nations. Stronger cooperation among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies, could play a truly important role in strengthening multilateralism. As United Nations Ambassadors, we like to talk about multilateralism and multilateral diplomacy but we must also be better at practising it, at dialogue and at really listening to each other. We should also break the silos in our mindset and learn to better trust and better cooperate with each other.

We must address the multidimensional root causes of conflict through prevention, mediation, the protection of human rights and sustainable development. Hungary remains committed to preventive diplomacy, as well as building trust and reconciliation. I believe that multilateralism is in fact about inclusion, providing everyone with a seat at the table to participate, follow and resolve our disputes together and to learn from each other on the way. The contribution of women to establishing and strengthening multilateralism must be recognized. Some pioneering women representatives were present at the foundation of the United Nations itself. However, still today gender equality and parity need to be achieved here at the United Nations and beyond. We acknowledge the Secretary-General for his leadership in achieving gender equality in senior-level positions at the United Nations.

Hungary is a committed supporter of the effective functioning of the Human Rights Council. However, due to the overpoliticization, selectivity, polarized nature of positions and unmanageable workload, the Human Rights Council is increasingly less able to fulfil its tasks. In speaking about strengthening multilateralism, we must mention the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. Hungary has been committed to the 2030 Agenda from the very beginning. Our first voluntary national review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals focused on the Goals on water and sanitation, energy provision, sustainable cities, responsible consumption and production and the balance of ecosystems. The Hungarian Government is strongly committed to addressing climate change, and we supported the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement by being one of the first countries to ratify it.

Hungary strongly supports the fight against terrorism. We believe that the role of the United Nations and multilateralism should also be better used and strengthened in that regard. We believe in the need for universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law at both the national and international levels and its commitment to an international order based on the rule of law and international law, which, together with the principles of justice, is essential for peaceful coexistence and cooperation among States. The international community therefore observed the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute earlier this year. The Statute has stood the test of time, having established the International Criminal Court, which has contributed not only to holding the perpetrators of the most serious crimes accountable but also to assisting the victims of such crimes.

In today's interconnected and globalized world, multilateral solutions have no real alternatives. Multilateralism will survive, but perhaps with new, renewed or reinvented international multilateral institutions, pushing us out of our comfortable situations. That could be beneficial if, by standing firmly by

our principles, we are sufficiently flexible to use the opportunities presented by the shifting landscape.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I thank the Chinese presidency for convening this important open debate with the timely and topical theme of strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. Azerbaijan associates itself with the statement made earlier today by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would like to share some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The challenges facing the world today and the increasing instability give rise to the need to strengthen the international legal order and to rekindle faith in multilateralism and confidence in the United Nations. The United Nations is a critical pillar of multilateralism and the purposes and principles of its Charter constitute the foundational normative framework in international relations. There is no alternative to the commonly agreed rules and their universal application. It is our common duty to promote and support a reformed, reinvigorated and strengthened multilateral system. Azerbaijan commends the Secretary-General's strong commitment to reform and fully supports his determination to genuinely contribute to preventing wars, sustaining peace and making the United Nations more integrated, effective and efficient.

First and foremost, all States must strictly comply with their international obligations, particularly those relating to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the inviolability of their internationally recognized borders. The objective of ensuring a peaceful, just and prosperous world is hardly achievable if the universally accepted fundamental values, norms and principles are overtly disregarded so as to whitewash aggressions and other illegal actions. The established principle of the inadmissibility of the use of force for the acquisition of territory and the ensuing obligation of non-recognition of situations resulting from serious violations of international law must be applied and enforced universally and unconditionally.

Needless to say, the implementation of resolutions adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations, as well as accountability, acquires significant importance in that connection. Apparent disregard of Security Council resolutions containing binding demands cannot constitute an accepted practice in the Security Council's discharging of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The faithful implementation of international treaties is also among the key prerequisites of the global system of harmonizing international relations and of individual and collective efforts towards confronting the threats and challenges to peace, security and stability. Important progress has been achieved in recent years in enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional partners under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations across a full range of areas — from the maintenance of international peace and security and humanitarian assistance to development and the protection of human rights.

However, serious challenges remain. While regional organizations are normally well-positioned to understand and address the causes and consequences of armed conflict and crises, not all of them are capable of ensuring Member States' compliance with their statutory commitments. In some instances, regional arrangements are evidently misused by the violators of international law as a shield for consolidating military gains and undermining efforts aimed at achieving solutions to regional conflicts and other security problems.

The United Nations, which was established to prevent war and human suffering by binding all its Members through a common rules-based order, plays a central role in ensuring that all involved in addressing peace and security concerns uphold the uniform application of the purposes and principles of the Organization. Support for that role of the United Nations and for safeguarding its collective security, political and humanitarian mechanisms is crucial in maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development.

Coherent global responses and common efforts, with the United Nations at its core, are the most effective ways to address conflicts, fight climate change and global terrorism, manage forced displacement and migratory flows and achieve the goals of peace, inclusive sustainable development and human rights for all.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for having

chosen to include this issue on the Security Council's agenda. I am struck by the number of Member States that want to contribute to this discussion — clearly, we all want to address it meaningfully.

We believe that it is first important to remind ourselves why multilateralism matters and what it means to our planet and its inhabitants. For us in Canada, multilateralism of course leads us to think first of the work of the Blue Helmets, who work to protect civilians. We celebrate the fact that fewer people died in the first decade of this century than in any decade in the twentieth century. We think of the more than 80 million people in over 80 countries helped by the World Food Programme each year. We also recall the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization on civil aviation, the work of the International Maritime Organization on maritime routes, by the World Trade Organization on the development of inclusive trade and by the World Health Organization in helping to eradicate smallpox — and hopefully also polio in the near future. While the system is imperfect, most of us believe it to be essential in resolving the challenges of the present and the future. That is why we want not only to maintain it but to improve it as well.

(*spoke in English*)

This multilateral architecture will always remain a work in progress. There will be no day when we will say: "This is it. It is all done; it is all perfect." This is the nature of the beast. From its inception, the world has always been changing. The difference in the last 25 to 50 years is that the speed of change has accelerated and our multilateral institutions — like many other institutions of the world — are, unsurprisingly, finding it challenging to adapt fast enough. One thing is clear: it is urgent that we build a more inclusive and sustainable world. It is also clear that multilateral institutions are essential to this construction. Let us go back to what is essential for a moment. The Charter of the United Nations obliges us to act in the best interest of all of humankind, reaffirming

> "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The Charter grounds our actions in a set of obligations that Member States accept when they join and are expected to carry out thereafter. Looking forward, the challenge to multilateralism is fundamentally whether we choose to live up to our obligations; whether we each do our fair share; whether we fulfil the global compacts we have agreed — on climate change and on migration and refugees — and whether we implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

Multilateralism is too often associated with inefficient bureaucracy, disconnected from the reality of the people it aims to assist. We cannot sweep these criticisms under the carpet. We need to address the trust deficit, both within the United Nations and in the broader multilateral context by engaging and listening, as well as being inclusive and open to compromise. We need to commit to reforming the United Nations and our own institutions to make them more transparent, inclusive, effective and accountable.

Multilateralism is not about posturing or preaching. It is not about adopting the same resolutions year after year. It is about listening to each other, learning from each other, finding solutions together and getting things done for our people and our planet. Canada is committed to helping build a better world where a rules-based international order is inclusive and sustainable, with its benefits are shared by all. That is one of the reasons Canada is seeking a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2021-2022.

Together we can renew and revitalize the institutions that we have spent more than seven decades building. They have contributed so much to our global development and security. The foundation is there — it is solid, yet let us never take it for granted. That is why we absolutely need to work even harder together to make them fit for purpose. Let us agree, like my colleague from Hungary just said, that we may have to accept getting out of our comfort zones to do so. Let us find opportunities to work together in good faith and partnership towards a safer, fairer and more secure and sustainable world — a world where no one is left behind.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): A lot has already been said, but at the outset I wish to align myself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, as well as fully subscribing to what the Secretary-General said this morning at the beginning of the meeting. He set out a historic framework for our debate and highlighted the major challenges we face, particularly on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals. I would like to be brief and make four short points.

My first point has to do with cherry-picking. Today everybody lauded multilateralism and affirmed that they are in favour of a rules-based international order. At the same time, we all know that there are individual States that say, "I feel constrained by a particular Security Council resolution, and I just do not abide by it. I ignore it." Or there is another State that would say that, "I feel constrained by a ruling by an international arbitration court, and I just ignore it." Or there is another country that says, "There is an international memorandum, but I feel constrained. I just ignore it." If everybody in this Chamber does that, that is the end of multilateralism and a rules-based order, and we will return, as Robert Kagan just wrote, to the jungle. Of course there are many resolutions and international agreements that we might not like too much, but we have to see it as a long-term investment. We all benefit from a rules-based international order. Germany will always defend the rules-based order. We believe that the international rules create reliability, predictability and acceptance. We believe that we have a collective interest in upholding the international rules-based order and maintaining legitimacy in the eyes of our stakeholders — our people.

The second point that I would like to make concerns accountability. If we agree on a rules-based order, we need to ensure that the rules are observed. Uncertainties in international law must be removed and violations need to be sanctioned. In that connection, I want to thank the Chinese presidency for inviting the President of the International Court of Justice to the discussion today to highlight this point. We are commemorating the end of the First World War. Germany is responsible for some of the worst crimes and violations of international law being committed. We are also responsible for what happened in the Second World War, for the Holocaust. For us, and I think for humankind, it was very important that we had the Nuremberg trials. We also think it is very important that we have the International Criminal Court and that we uphold the Court's rulings.

Let me come to my third point, which concerns human rights. The dignity and worth of the human person are at the foundation of the Charter of the United Nations. We commemorate this year the seventieth birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We need to take our responsibilities seriously. We are witnessing enormous suffering today. We see children killed, women raped. We see people dying of hunger. Civilians are bombarded. We see people marginalized because of their race or colour. We cannot accept that. That must remain at the centre of our attention. We must stay focused on the individual.

My fourth point is that we need to reform. I want to echo what my Canadian colleague just said about multilateralism being always a work in progress. Yes, we have to uphold the existing rules. But we also have to develop them further. We face new challenges that we have to cope with. The world is changing. We also have to reform the United Nations, its bodies and its working methods. We fully support and commend the Secretary-General for the reforms that he has so far carried out. We also believe that there is an urgent need for a reform of the Security Council so as to preserve its legitimacy.

Germany will join Security Council starting on 1 January. For us, the overarching principle will be to observe the rules-based international order. The Security Council is in charge of preserving peace and security. We want to concentrate on the prevention side to prevent threats to peace and security from arising. Therefore, we want to concentrate on the catalysts and drivers of conflict, human rights, climate change and sexual violence against women. In doing that, we are looking forward to working with our regional and cross-regional partners.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza: The Holy See thanks the presidency of the People's Republic of China for convening this open debate on the important and timely topic of multilateralism and the role of the United Nations.

This theme has acquired new urgency today as the international community is suffering from what the Secretary-General has defined as trust deficit disorder. People are losing faith in political establishments within their own countries. Unilateral foreign policies backed by economic and military might are undermining trust between nations. There is a weakening in multilateral trust, seen, for example, in how the disarmament agenda is experiencing paralysis, as well as other worrisome developments in the multilateral negotiating bodies.

The Holy See believes that multilateralism cannot be grounded in a false sense of security, such as the threat of mutual destruction or annihilation, or in simply maintaining a balance of power. A healthy,

universally beneficial multilateralism is built on justice, integral human development, respect for fundamental human rights, care for our planet, the participation of all in public life, trust between peoples, the support of institutions that promote peace, access to education and health care and solidarity and dialogue. In that regard, the recent high-level dialogue of the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council was an important step towards renewing the commitment of the United Nations to multilateralism, not only in terms of its multiple actors but also for its multifaceted approach to the challenges of our time. That is a confirmation of the crucial role that the United Nations can and should play in order to rebuild trust among its Members.

In considering multilateralism, we have before us two opposing perspectives: the first is based on the conviction that conflicts can be resolved through a determined and broad-based willingness to negotiate effectively in the light of the ways and wisdom of law; the second perspective maintains that, in the face of threats to peace and security, force is more efficacious and direct. The latter, however, seriously compromises international cooperation rather than enhancing it, leading inexorably to negative repercussions on multilateralism. One of the outcomes emerging from this open debate must therefore be a clear message in favour of the force of law rather than the law of force.

Interdependence among nations and the risks of reciprocal destruction require renewed emphasis on multilateralism, which, rather than placing excessive importance on force or practicing selective treaty-enforcement, demands all States and individuals to enforce decisively the laws and procedures that have been established to mitigate and eliminate threats. Aware of the gravity of the present situation, in which law must be chosen to prevail over force, every member of the international community must be animated by a profound sense of responsibility.

Besides guaranteeing peace and security, the noble vocation of the United Nations as the pre-eminent multilateral institution consists in promoting integral development and defending human rights. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community committed itself to ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions and pledged that no one will be left behind. It did so based on an approach that recognizes the centrality of the human person. Integral human development and the full exercise of human dignity, however, cannot be imposed, but rather must be allowed to flourish for each individual and for every nation in relation with others. We must affirm the common conviction that everything is interconnected and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationship with nature should be reflected in fraternity and fairness among nations. We cannot rebuild broken trust unless we begin to walk together in solidarity with our less fortunate brothers and sisters and so help free them from oppressive poverty and enable them to become dignified agents of their own destiny.

That common vision must draw strength from a renewed understanding of multilateralism, founded on the idea of the international community as a family of nations committed to pursuing the good of all. It requires the exercise of solidarity on the part of Governments, international organizations and all men and women. Its strong foundation is the collective and shared responsibility for the common good and the development of those who are poorest so that every human being may truly feel that we are a member of the global family.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to China for holding this open debate on such an important topic.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We believe that, in confronting global challenges and threats, it is imperative to preserve and promote multilateralism, especially by strengthening the central role of the United Nations and promoting international cooperation. In that regard, Cuba reiterates its firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which form the basis of multilateralism and of the international system that we have built within the framework of the Organization. The principles of international law enshrined in the Charter — namely, sovereign equality among States; respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States; non-intervention in matters under States' domestic jurisdiction; refraining from the threat of the use or use of force; and the peaceful settlement of disputes — must continue to be the basic foundation of international law and should

guide the actions of States and international relations at all times.

Attempts to impose domestic policies; enact and apply extraterritorial laws, such as the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba for almost 60 years in contravention of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and 27 General Assembly resolutions; the vulgar manipulation, politicization and double standards concerning matters of global importance, including human rights, by the Government of the United States and its pressure, reprisals, sanctions and financial blackmail against the United Nations, are an attack on multilateralism and pose enormous challenges and threats to the peaceful norms governing the coexistence of States. Disregarding previously agreed international commitments and obligations, such as the withdrawal of the United States from international agreements of enormous consequence for addressing global phenomena, such as climate change, for example, only demonstrates a profound disrespect for international norms and puts the equilibrium, well-being and security of our planet in jeopardy.

We reject in the strongest terms this morning's statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States in this Chamber against the Government and the people of Cuba. The Government of the United States does not have even slightest moral authority to criticize Cuba or any other entity in the area of human rights. We recall that Cuba is a State party to 44 international human rights instruments, while the United States is a State party to only 18. It does not respect the right to life, peace, development, security or food security, nor does it recognize the rights of children. It flagrantly violates the human rights of its own citizens, especially African-Americans, Hispanics, minorities, refugees and migrants, whom it jails in cages, including children. It has carried out extrajudicial executions, kidnapping and torture, including in the prison of Naval Station Guantánamo Bay, which illegally occupies our territory. We all know that the United States Government is responsible for crimes against humanity. It used nuclear weapons on a civilian population. It established military dictatorships in Latin America, organized bloody coups d'état and intervened unscrupulously in the electoral processes and internal affairs in the majority of States of the world. Certainly, none of that honours multilateralism.

In a global environment characterized by increasing threats to international peace and security; unconventional wars; gross violations of States' sovereignty; policies of domination through the use of force; attempts to re-impose a unipolar order; breaches of international law; the ominous and arbitrary breaking of international treaties; the proliferation of unilateral sanctions and trade wars, the only possible response is to preserve and revalidate multilateralism, based on strict respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. To that end, the reform of the United Nations aimed at achieving a truly democratic and participatory Organization — with a transparent and democratized Security Council and a revitalized General Assembly — is imperative. Cuba reiterates its unshakeable commitment to continue working together with the United Nations and its Member States towards the establishment of a democratic and just international order that responds to the demand for peace, development and justice of peoples throughout the world and that guarantees the preservation and strengthening of multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda): Allow us to join other delegations in congratulating China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate, which is very important to most delegations. We recall the statement made by the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China during the general debate during the high-level week in September (see A/73/PV.12) when he emphasized the importance and the necessity of multilateralism. Therefore, it comes as no surprise, Sir, that you chose to hold this debate during the earliest days of your presidency, and my delegation joins others to voice their concerns in defence of multilateralism. The Security Council is the right place for us to do just that. We also thank the Secretary-General for his statement and his commitment to ensuring that the United Nations continues to play its central role in facilitating multilateralism. We also thank the other briefers for their contributions to today's debate.

Global governance is characterized by political and security interdependence. Most contemporary challenges — whether terrorism, climate change, migration or transnational organized crime, among many others, — cannot be effectively addressed

without multilateral cooperation. The formation and evolution of the United Nations over the years have shown us that multilateralism is an essential ingredient for a peaceful world. The authors of the Charter of the United Nations were not mistaken when they set out in that great document by recalling the horrors and pains of the scourge of war, which we unfortunately so easily forget. They did not envisage how much the international system would evolve, and they did not have to. Their bitter experience convinced them that multilateralism was the only way to save humankind from destruction.

And they were right. That is the true spirit of the Organization. The purposes and principles of the Charter enhance that vision and the practice of multilateralism by encouraging States to pursue cooperation over isolation, the peaceful settlement of disputes over war and a common vision whereby Member States relate as equals. However, the world is a dynamic place, and history is always on the move. New challenges have emerged over the years and require us to adapt to them. I am reminded of the words of the legendary Nigerian author Chinua Achebe:

> "Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching."

We too, as the nations of the world, must learn to adapt and address evolving challenges. In no way are we saying that multilateralism is perfect. The question is, how do we make multilateralism work for us in our context? In that regard, I will make three brief points.

First, while we are all pursuing our national interests, at the core of it all we need to build on the fact that the people we serve have common aspirations. They want to live in a peaceful, sustainable and dignified world. Let us build on those shared aspirations rather than focus on myopic goals. In that regard, Rwanda calls for continued cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. For instance, the recently signed Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security is a good example of effective cooperation. The African Union (AU) is rooted in our belief that regional organizations can demonstrate how multilateralism continues to be relevant and beneficial for people all over the world.

Secondly, let us move ahead with reforming the Organization, which belongs to us all. The Secretary-General needs our continued support. Africa has made its position clear on key issues, such as reforming the Council. Given the amount of time that the same arguments have been made, surely it is reasonable that we address these issues conclusively. The Security Council is one of the United Nations organs that contribute much to global peace and security. It needs to expand its scope of representation and extend the power of the veto to other Member States. Security challenges are multiplying in number and complexity; they need an inclusive decision-making process.

Thirdly, it is vital that the United Nations continues its support to the regional peace and security arrangements and mechanisms that have demonstrated gains in conflict mediation and peace restoration. For example, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development conflict-resolution mechanism, which led the peace process in South Sudan, and the United Nations-AU partnership aimed at ending the crisis in the Sahel region and the Lake Chad basin are good examples of initiatives that are successfully embracing and putting into practice the principles of multilateralism.

In conclusion, we have all that it takes to resolve our contemporary challenges. Nothing is new or alien to us. There is no unbridled force that we are dealing with. As States Members of the United Nations, we all have the prerogative to do what we can to create a better world for future generations. I reaffirm Rwanda's commitment to multilateralism and the equality of States. We believe that, with the reforms that are being pursued here at the United Nations, we can breathe new life into the Organization and make it fit for purpose.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Maawda (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your friendly country on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. We also thank you for providing us this opportunity to discuss an extremely important topic for the international community.

The challenges facing the world have served to underscore the singular importance of the role played by multilateral diplomacy in meeting those challenges and strengthening international relations, while also supporting the efforts of the United Nations to ensure the aspirations of the international community. Multilateral diplomacy therefore plays a critical and

vital role in upholding international law and advancing international cooperation. The United Nations has thereby become the conscience of humankind and the compass marking the trends of the international community. For more than seven decades it has served as a unifying platform aimed at maintaining international peace and security, mitigating and preventing conflicts, achieving development and preserving human dignity.

The current international order is experiencing a critical stage of crises and conflicts, as well as various challenges that go beyond the imagination of the founding fathers of the United Nations. Based on that reality and in order to achieve the goals of the United Nations as a multilateral system representing the entire international community, our commitments as Member States compel us to use our capacities to promote security and the role of the United Nations so as to address international challenges and enable the Organization.

The United Nations has played a vital and significant role in confronting challenges, conflicts and crises created by irresponsible policies. The resolutions and procedures of the United Nations, as well as international legal instruments, have been a safety valve to maintain international peace and security and respect for the rule of law. They also have been a deterrent against all those who seek to undermine international security. That is why cooperation between Member States to achieve the United Nations goals is a non-negotiable commitment. No State can work in isolation from other States — a notion that reflects the concept of collective security in the international system as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations.

Amid the intertwining interests of States and societies, the commitments dictated by the multilateral international system call on us to continue working together and not lose the achievements and gains attained by the United Nations in different fields, while upholding the mechanisms identified by the Charter and the relevant international legal systems. Those are binding rules to tackle joint challenges and threats, ensure respect for international law and deter its violators, ensure respect for the sovereignty and security of States, prohibit the use or threat of use of force in international relations, respect the rights of people to self-determination and prevent conflicts and crises while resolving existing ones by peaceful means.

Multilateral diplomacy and support for the United Nations represent an essential pillar of the State of Qatar's policy. We are keen to continue promoting the capacity of this international Organization to achieve its goals. We have continued to strengthen our international partnerships to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter. We are closely working with effective stakeholders at the international level and with United Nations bodies to support all initiatives that help the United Nations to resolve regional and international crises.

The State of Qatar believes in the principle of international cooperation and shared responsibility. We have continued our voluntary contributions to many activities and programmes carried out by the Organization at all levels. We have also strengthened our partnership with numerous United Nations entities in order to enable them to effectively carry out their mandates, particularly with regard to international peace and security, combating terrorism and extremism and promoting human rights and development. In that context, we are continuing our efforts to open United Nations House, which would host representative offices from many United Nations bodies. That would facilitate and support their work in the region.

In order to support United Nations efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts in our region, the mediation undertaken by the State of Qatar with relevant parties as part of multilateral diplomatic means has been appreciated and welcomed by the United Nations. The aim is to peacefully defuse and settle many of the crises in the region, in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Last January, the State of Qatar hosted regional consultations on sustainable peace in the Middle East and beyond, which is consistent with our policy to support United Nations efforts and objectives in the area of peace. The goal was also to support preventive diplomacy, which is one of the Secretary-General's priorities. Those consultations were part of the preparations for the high-level meeting of the General Assembly that was held in April.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates its commitment to the multilateral work at the international level and to supporting the role played by the United Nations. We continue our cooperation and partnership with the Organization in order to achieve the goals for which the United Nations was founded, which we all seek to achieve.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on a matter of increasing relevance.

Seventy-three years ago in San Francisco, we committed ourselves to strengthening the three pillars of the current international system, namely, peace and security, human rights and development. Building on that commitment, we developed institutions and adopted rules. Those institutions and rules help us resolve our differences peacefully. They enable us to establish norms for dealing with global challenges, from climate change to weapons of mass destruction. They help regulate free trade and secure financial services. We all know that those institutions and rules are not perfect. The need for reform is well known. We may not completely agree on how to best fix the system; however, we can all agree on the benefits of a rules-based world order. Also, we can all agree that the correct approach is neither unilateralism nor exceptionalism. Unilateralism is a departure from our common values. It is not a sign of good leadership. Exceptionalism is a departure from our joint responsibilities. It is not a sign of strength. If we want everyone to commit to a rules-based system, we need to lead by example. And the new age of multilateralism can only start here, at United Nations Headquarters. The United Nations system can be more responsive, efficient and effective. It can once again lead and inspire. We need to define our priorities better to that end.

First, we must reform the Security Council into a more transparent, democratic, representative and accountable body. The more transparency the Council displays while undertaking its work, the more accountable it will be. The more it shares information, consults and accepts input, the more effective it will become. A Council that is more responsive to the United Nations membership will be better placed to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world. Any success in that process depends on a genuine spirit of compromise among us, without exception. Let us remember that, by signing the Charter of the United Nations, we reaffirmed our faith in the equal rights of nations large and small.

Secondly, the United Nations needs to devise more effective ways of preventing conflicts and crises. To do so, we must address the root causes properly. Building and sustaining peace requires us to fight poverty, inequality, extremism and discrimination as well. We also need to promote human rights and the rule of law. We need to ensure increased participation and economic empowerment among all segments of society. At the same time, the United Nations can make use of Chapter VI tools more often. The guiding principles of mediation and good offices have a solid foundation in the Charter. That is why the Group of Friends of Mediation, co-chaired by Turkey and Finland, strives to increase the role of mediation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Thirdly, the principle of local ownership should be at the core of our collective efforts within the United Nations system. Successful partnerships with local Governments, civil society and the private sector are key factors in effectively mobilizing resources. One such recent initiative is the process on the global compact on migration. Over the past 18 months, we conducted together an inclusive and transparent dialogue with the contribution of civil society. We were able to bridge our differences. We collectively achieved a positive outcome to create better lives for 260 million migrants around the world. We now look forward to the adoption of the global compact in Marrakesh. The compact is an inspiring testament to the importance of multilateralism. It is an example of the moral vision that we can inject into the heart of the international system.

The underlying message during this open debate has been the necessity to uphold multilateralism and enhance international cooperation against all odds. The Council has an important role to play to that end. Increased transparency and effectiveness will further enhance the legitimacy of this body. That, in turn, will only strengthen the role of the United Nations in achieving peace, security and economic prosperity to the benefit of all, with a renewed commitment to multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for convening this timely debate.

For the past 73 years we have been striving to build a rules-based order, in which principles such as equality among States, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the promotion and protection of human rights underpinned our relations. Those are the same values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and

together they constitute the bedrock of multilateralism. However, the very idea of placing our hopes in shared institutions and rules is now unfortunately in jeopardy. Multilateral institutions are at a difficult juncture, and there is a widespread feeling that changes must be urgently undertaken. But what are the causes of the current crisis?

First of all, our institutional architecture, including the United Nations, is not well equipped to respond to current challenges. As the Secretary-General stated in the plenary of the General Assembly last September, "twenty-first century challenges outpace twentieth century institutions and mindsets" (*A/73/PV.6, p. 1*). We have failed to update our main institutions to properly reflect the current geopolitical landscape and the increasingly multipolar order. Entire regions and countries with excellent records in contributing to international peace and security are still excluded from permanent representation in the Security Council. While the majority of situations on the agenda of the Council relate to African countries, the continent remains without permanent representation. It is crucial to increase the number of members in both categories — not only non-permanent but also permanent. It is regrettable that in 25 years of continuous discussions no results whatsoever have been achieved in the efforts to reform the Council. Even worse, several Member States feel the pressure to not even engage in the current international negotiations. The result is ever-growing scepticism about the ability of the Council to deliver on its mandate and to manage sensitive conflicts. Brazil strongly believes that the Security Council is still the appropriate body to deal with threats to international peace and security. But, in order to avoid the progressive erosion of its legitimacy, it is high time for real and effective reform.

At the same time, the Security Council must avoid encroaching on issues that fall under the purview of other United Nations bodies. Even though we agree that the Council must address the root causes of conflicts, that should happen in very specific contexts related to items on its agenda, and never with the purpose of developing general policies and norms. Our crisis is also compounded by the inability to stick to what we agree upon. Selectivity in choosing which obligations to follow also undermines multilateralism and international cooperation, since it directly impairs our capacity to build trust among ourselves.

One case in point is nuclear disarmament, an objective we have not attained in spite of the very clear provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That Treaty has greatly helped us achieve progress in containing proliferation. But the nuclear threat will be completely addressed only through disarmament. Unfortunately, the opposition by some countries to the recent Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons calls into question the commitment to rid the world of all types of weapons of mass destruction. That opens up space for unilateral decisions and reduces the faith in multilateralism as a means to reach decisions on hard and sensitive matters.

Some issues relating to the use of force are also worrisome examples of the inability to stick to what we agreed upon. There are increasingly frequent attempts to depart from the collective security system created in 1945. We simply cannot afford to lose sight of the fundamental notion that the prohibition on the use of force is the rule and that self-defence and Chapter VII authorization are exceptions. Brazil has been consistently voicing its disagreement with interpretations that seek to expand the scope of the right to self-defence, in particular with regard to non-State actors. Also, we have been calling upon the Security Council to follow up on notifications received under Article 51, to ensure that the obligations laid out in the Charter are being fulfilled.

There is also room for improvement in the monitoring of the implementation of Security Council resolutions authorizing the use of force. Brazil has suggested that inspiration be drawn from the peacekeeping and sanctions regimes so as to ensure that those resolutions include sunset clauses, demand adequate reporting and establish panels of experts. Given their exceptional nature, such authorizations must be limited in their legal, operational and temporal aspects. Those troops might not be wearing blue helmets, but they act under the authority — and legitimacy — of a blue text.

We must do our best to preserve the United Nations as the most symbolic expression of international democracy and of our determination to live in peace, promote and protect human rights and attain sustainable development. We must above all heed the lessons of the past. Multilateralism is not an option, it is an undeniable need. The alternatives to it are grim: fragmentation, unilateralism, more frequent use of force and the inability to tackle challenges that no one can solve without cooperation. It is our responsibility to

work with a sense of urgency to update our institutions and norms in order to promote international peace and security. Brazil will remain fully committed to strengthening the United Nations at this difficult juncture.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing today. I also thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this timely debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

The United Nations is now 73 years old. Addressing the assembled delegates at the start of the meeting in San Francisco at which the Charter of the United Nations was signed, the President of the United States, Harry Truman, said

> "You members of this Conference are to be the architects of the better world. In your hands rests our future."

Today his words are more important than ever. The United Nations was created to provide the foundation and framework for a rules-based multilateral system. Such a system is the backbone of, and a recipe for, a better world. Since the end of the Second World War, multilateral institutions have helped countries around the world to avoid catastrophic wars and achieve unprecedented levels of development. As much as we need more international cooperation today, multilateralism has come under pressure. As this open debate serves to indicates, we are arriving at a point where multilateral cooperation is beginning to seem like more of an aspiration than a reality.

Lamenting the dire state of multilateralism is only paying lip service to the rules-based international order. We all know the diagnosis of current global affairs. We all know too well the consequences when the United Nations Charter-based order fails. Protracted conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere, as well as the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War are only a few stark reminders of such failure. We need action. During her statement at the general debate of the General Assembly in September (see A/73/PV.10), the President of Lithuania, Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, urged the international community to take responsibility for our future and enable the United Nations to act. Responsibility, political will, commitment to reforms and making compromises are top prerequisites in order to change the current state of multilateral affairs. We need to use this moment as an opportunity for genuine and lasting reforms.

Our commitment to stronger global governance and binding rules should translate into the effective reform of the United Nations system. There is no better way to preserve and reinforce the relevance and credibility of the United Nations than making the Organization more efficient. In that regard, we stand fully behind the Secretary-General's reform agenda in all its dimensions. That agenda has the potential to make the whole United Nations family less fragmented and more united and coherent.

A relevant and strong United Nations requires an efficient, transparent and inclusive Security Council. Directly or indirectly, inaction by the Security Council and the international community encourages aggression and the use of force and threatens the entire multilateral system, which is based on international law. Restraining the use of the veto, inter alia, would make the Council's responses to ongoing crises more coherent and reliable. Lithuania therefore strongly supports the French-Mexican initiative on limiting the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Lithuania also actively endorses the relevant initiatives of Liechtenstein and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group. Justice cannot be vetoed. It must go beyond political manipulation. International peace, security and justice are not possible without international law. Ending impunity and ensuring justice for all is an absolute must in order to reinforce trust in the United Nations and ensure the credibility of our multilateral system. At the same time, when justice is not ensured and impunity thrives, multilateralism can neither function nor perform.

It is important to acknowledge that many of the current challenges to the global order are born and grown domestically. Blaming the United Nations, international institutions and agreements for our domestic failures is not a viable way forward. While it is true that multilateralism needs to deliver much better at the country level, it is also true that respect for the rules-based global system starts at home. It begins with open, peaceful societies based on the rule of law, the freedom of expression, access to independent justice,

respect for human rights and accountable and inclusive institutions.

Finally, let me conclude by underlining that the value of multilateralism itself transcends any particular policy or goal. The rule of law has intrinsic value. Multilateralism must not lead to inaction, and we all need to contribute to rebuilding trust in the capacity of the United Nations to deliver. Lithuania remains committed to playing its active role in multilateral action.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Vaultier Mathias (Portugal): I thank the Chinese delegation for convening today's open debate.

Portugal is firmly engaged in a multilateral system based on the primacy of international law and the principles and values of the Charter. Multilateral organizations continue to be privileged platforms for constructive and inclusive dialogue among States for the purpose of tackling the increasingly complex challenges facing the world. Whereas no country can address all threats on its own, we have to build bridges and broaden dialogue by strengthening interregional alliances and international cooperation.

Against this background, it is crucial to preserve and strengthen the multilateral system, especially the irreplaceable role of the United Nations and its capacity to advance a comprehensive and transversal concept of peace that simultaneously promotes human rights and sustainable development. Several international bodies are faced with declining budgets. The lack of funding and political support impairs the implementation of the reforms needed to improve their effectiveness for the benefit of all.

At the outset, we must strengthen conflict prevention by developing early-warning systems that can trigger immediate action by the international community. Similarly, we must support the ongoing reforms to improve the United Nations peace and security pillar under which peacekeeping operations take place. Aware of the interdependence between security and development, we are convinced that lasting peace will be achieved only if we address the root causes of conflicts. Underdevelopment and the imbalance of wealth distribution are the most obvious causes. Finally, it is important to integrate our action by including the perspective of gender balance and the contribution of young people in conflict prevention and resolution.

Within the United Nations system, Portugal has defined a consistent approach that encompasses responsibilities in missions around the world. Portugal is currently engaged in seven United Nations missions, notably the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, where 178 Portuguese peacekeepers are on the ground in the Central African Republic, embodying our strong commitment to contributing to the effort of stabilizing the country and the region.

As I conclude, I wish to recall the last time Portugal held the presidency of the Security Council, precisely seven years ago. Our main initiatives then were, coincidentally, a discussion on new challenges to security (see S/PV.6668) and an open debate on the working methods of the Security Council (see S/PV.6672). Apart from the new threats and risks to international security, which were then being increasingly acknowledged, such as terrorism, transnational organized crime and climate change, just to name a few, we were also very much aware of the importance of addressing the well-grounded demands for a more transparent, efficient and operational Security Council as the collective security mechanism.

Finally, allow me to quote the words of His Excellency the President of the Portuguese Republic in his speech at the general debate of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly:

> "Portugal believes that multilateral action, political dialogue and diplomatic wisdom are the only possible path to harmonious coexistence among nations and peoples" (*A/73/PV.9, p. 26*).

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt): (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of the People's Republic of China for having convened today's important meeting on ways to strengthen multilateral action and for inviting Member States to take part in this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the representative of the President of the General Assembly for their valuable briefings at the beginning of the meeting.

Today's debate follows another high-level dialogue, which was called for by the President of the General

Assembly on 31 October, on the renewal of our commitment to multilateral action. That debate was also co-sponsored by the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. Our recurring dialogue on this issue reflects the difficulty of the challenges multilateral action faces, as well as our shared awareness of the need not to delay in addressing them by strengthening contexts and practices related to multilateralism. In this regard, I would like to stress three areas that I believe are particularly important and should be a priority in strengthening multilateralism.

First is the comprehensive approach pertaining to crises and other issues. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a road map for our common future has provided us with a global approach to development. Nevertheless, we are concerned to see that attempts are being made by some to choose to discuss certain issues and close their eyes to others. Our efforts to establish international peace and security are facing similar challenges. This selective approach is undoubtedly leading to opportunistic multilateralism, which is harmful in the long term to the trust and credibility we have placed in international institutions and multilateral action.

In this context, the selective approach of the Security Council in dealing with certain issues, including those relating to the Middle East, and its double standards with regard to the implementation of its own pertinent resolutions have greatly contributed to the current regrettable situations in that delicate part of the world, which is characterized by deterioration and disorder. This selective approach is exacerbating the state of polarization we have historically seen in the Council, and has undermined the ability of the international community to resolve recent ongoing crises, such as those in Yemen and in Syria, as well as its ability to reach fair and lasting solutions to more long-standing issues, such as the Palestinian question.

That brings me to the second area in strengthening multilateralism, which is through the establishment of democracy worldwide and ensuring the universality of multilateralism and fair representation. The successive crises that we are facing as a human society have proved that multilateral action on a small scale — so-called mini-multilateralism, or closed forums diplomacy — have created a kind of alternative multilateralism, which has not prevented conflicts from breaking out or made it possible for the international community to overcome them. That applies to all areas, be it the maintenance of international peace and security, global crises or other issues, including the recent international financial crisis, the effects of which are still being felt.

With regard to multilateral institutions, I would like to make particular reference to the structural irregularities of the Security Council. It is important that we advance towards the genuine reform of the Council in order to remedy the hegemony of certain members. We support the Common African Position, which seeks to bring genuine change to the Council's decision-making mechanism, rather than simply cosmetic changes.

That brings me to the third and final aspect of our vision for strengthening multilateral action and our practices, namely, the lack of commitment to collective action in the light of the difficulties we face and the substantial efforts that are required to achieve it. The notion of collective action entails the generation of solutions on which everyone agrees so that we can attain the Sustainable Development Goals and maintain international peace and security. In practice, that requires intensive and tough deliberations and consultations, as well as compromise and creative and innovative vision. However, we cannot ignore the impression shared by some of us, enhanced by some of our practices, that our main multilateral Organization is increasingly becoming a forum for the mere delivery of speeches, with no effective implementation of measures or real impact. That is creating pseudo-multilateralism, of which we should be very wary.

The effectiveness of our Organization depends on our belief in it and respect for its Charter and on the capacities that we dedicate to allowing it to effectively fulfil its mission. In that regard, it is important that multilateralism also include decision-making and not be limited to mere deliberations and statements. We also need to provide the Organization with the resources necessary to implement the mandates that we have entrusted to it. In that context, I would like to warn against the growing threat of becoming dependent on voluntary funding as opposed to regular base funding, which is moving the Organization away from its mission and the multilateral nature of its main objectives.

In the light of the three areas that I have mentioned, and given that my country is a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, as well as the fact that Egypt is due to Chair the African Union in 2019, and that the African continent has the highest number of

peacekeeping operations and contributes the highest number of peacekeeping personnel, allow me to once again state that Egypt welcomes the adoption of the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, an initiative of the Secretary-General that will enable troop-contributing countries to participate in a more significant way in the consultations pertaining to strengthening peacekeeping operations. Egypt remains convinced that the effective deployment of peacekeeping operations requires an overall vision of all their stages, from designing the mandates to the periodic reviews, as well as the structure of operations and the equipment, predeployment and exit strategy.

It is therefore important that we establish practical and objective frameworks to assess performance through the competent bodies. We also have to ensure that there are sufficient resources available for the implementation of mandates and that the structure of the operation is commensurate with the specific nature and situation of the mission. In that regard, during its chairmanship of the African Union in 2019 Egypt will continue to focus on the various dimensions to implementing the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, notably by strengthening the institutional framework for tripartite dialogue among the troop- and equipment-contributing countries and the Secretariat. We also intend to deepen the strategic partnership with the United Nations in peacekeeping and in rebuilding and development efforts in post-conflict situations. On 18 and 19 November, Egypt will host a regional high-level conference on improving the performance of peacekeeping operations in Africa, based on the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, and allow troop-contributing countries to take part in discussions related to improving peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, we have become accustomed to the presence and criticism of the United Nations. We have therefore forgotten that the results achieved by the Organization can only reflect our cooperation or lack thereof. Allow me to remind the Council of the wise words that should never be forgotten of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at the first Security Council summit ever held on 31 January 1992, in which he stated,

> "Collective security can be based only on collective confidence and good faith — confidence in the principles by which it is governed and good faith in the means by which it is sought to be ensured. With all the convulsions in global society, only one power is left that can impose order on incipient chaos: it is the power of principles transcending changing perceptions of expediency." (*S/PV.3046, p. 11*)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Mardini: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warmly welcomes this debate on strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. We know from our humanitarian work in armed conflicts around the world how cooperation among States is of critical importance the maintenance of international peace and security. As guardians of international humanitarian law, we also have our own distinct relationships with States and have seen how effective multilateralism can have a long-lasting impact.

The Geneva Conventions will celebrate their seventieth anniversary next year. Adopted in 1949, they have been universally ratified by States and are at the core of international humanitarian law. To this day, we see their impact on the ground. We know not only that they are proof that multilateralism can work, but that they are essential for multilateralism to work. Today, I want to emphasize three points on why international humanitarian law is key to better upholding multilateralism and effectively addressing today's global challenges.

First, international humanitarian law mitigates suffering and the impact of armed conflict on people's lives. Multilateral agreements among States develop international humanitarian law to ensure that legal limits are in place. For example, multilateral efforts have secured humanitarian agreements on nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, landmines and the arms trade. Those rules save lives. Current multilateral discussions on certain new weapons are essential to keeping international humanitarian law up to speed with the rapid developments in technology. Greater State support for the implementation of and respect for international humanitarian law can help prevent and minimize human suffering in armed conflict.

Secondly, international humanitarian law regulates and limits the methods and means of warfare. Today's armed conflicts involve large numbers of States in protracted regional conflicts in many parts of the world, often working together in multilateral coalitions and

partnered operations. Multilateral military operations must respect the rules that States have developed and committed themselves to under the Geneva Conventions and other components of international humanitarian law. States supporting parties to armed conflict can and should use their influence on the conduct of hostilities to encourage greater respect for international humanitarian law. They can do that, for example, by embedding humanitarian rules into their own and their partners' policies on targeting military objectives, training soldiers and fighters and detaining adversaries.

Thirdly, international humanitarian law is principled and people-centred. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all people of the world and the sovereign equality of States are given due consideration. This people-centred view is core to international humanitarian law, to principled humanitarian action and to impartial humanitarian organizations like the ICRC. Our work in reducing human suffering across all conflict-affected communities is founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Multilateral cooperation respecting those principles and rules — agreed to by all States — is necessary if humanitarian action is to be effective, so that civilians can receive the support they are entitled to under the Geneva Conventions.

International humanitarian law is integral to multilateralism and multilateralism is integral to international humanitarian law. These rules — painstakingly developed by States over the years — create important multilateral consensus on the limits of violence, which can be used on the ground every day to reduce human suffering and protect essential infrastructure. These rules work best when multilateralism works. People suffering in armed conflicts need multilateralism that works. Our call on the Security Council, on the upcoming seventieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, is to renew its commitment to people, to international humanitarian law and to multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's meeting. The Irish delegation sees it as a welcome opportunity and a continuation of the high-level debate at this year's General Assembly. Indeed, as your very useful concept note (S/2018/982, annex) points out, Mr. President, the vast majority of Member States at the General Assembly spoke up in defence of multilateralism — and many did so with great passion. Ireland was one of those.

Against the background of increasing international instability and uncertainty, Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister described his concerns for the future effectiveness of the United Nations (see A/73/PV.13). He insisted that the Organization's work simply cannot be replicated by transactional and selective bilateral engagement in which the powerful dominate and decisions are no longer based on the strength of argument and the need for fair outcomes. It might seem at this hour on Friday afternoon a bit clichéd to say it, but it is true that our challenges are too great and too global for anyone to take a unilateral approach in the long run. History shows us that those who took such a path have had to return to the multilateral family to share burdens and look for shared solutions.

One of the many Member States that expressed worry in the general debate about the current trends in global governance was China. We took particular note of two questions posed by China's Foreign Minister:

> "Should we stay committed to multilateralism or let unilateralism have its way? Should we seek to uphold the architecture of the world order or allow it to be eroded and collapse?" (*A/73/PV.12, p. 17*)

We must be very clear in our answers to the choices offered as we seek to strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. In doing so, of course, we must defend the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time we must recognize that there are new and very different threats to international peace and security, to the very survival of the planet and to the stable development of our societies. In some respects, the debate is no longer about effective multilateralism, but about saving the multilateral system.

As the concept note for this debate rightly states, we must grapple with the intertwining of traditional and non-traditional security issues. Collectively, we must acknowledge the pivotal nature of new and different factors, such as climate change and migration. Who could not have been convinced by the statement in the general debate by the Prime Minister of Barbados, in which she described the impact of flooding on her island State (see A/73/PV.13)? Who could have been left in any doubt upon hearing the words of the Prime Minister of Lesotho about the unprecedented magnitude

of the challenges facing migrants and the implications for us all (*ibid.*)?

Time today is very brief, and I cannot hope to detail how we can strengthen the overall system of the United Nations. But there are a few things that are obvious, if not easy. We need to simply implement multilateral agreements that we have signed on to, such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals. That will give credibility and strength to our system. We need to make the multilateral agenda relevant by ensuring that key constituencies, such as women and youth, are centrally included and involved.

We must enhance our partnerships. Today, no one can go it alone. The United Nations must strengthen its capacity to engage locally, nationally and regionally, and with international partners. We see a role for regional and subregional organizations, civil society actors and the private sector. We must communicate our own successes. International organizations are doing great work in many areas such as health, education and child advocacy. We should not let that go unnoticed or unreported.

Ireland believes that we need to press for change, not simply for reform of the administrative and budgetary structures of the multilateral institutions. We need simple, straightforward, hard-nosed political reform at the United Nations — none more necessary than here in the Security Council. Political reforms at the United Nations, in particular in the composition of the Council, would give an increased sense of ownership and participation on the part of Member States, our general public, and would strengthen its standing. We believe in particular that the anachronistic injustice in relation to the underrepresentation of Africa needs to be corrected, and soon. We also believe there should be consideration for a designated seat for small island States, but it goes beyond the question of composition. We would like to see an end to the use of the veto in this organ. In the meantime, we fully support the Franco-Mexican initiative to limit the use of veto in cases of mass atrocities.

My country, Ireland, is convinced that we need to combat the narrative that collective engagement somehow diminishes our sovereignty. A transactional diplomacy of the strong against the weak represents the real threat to our standing as independent nations.

As the concept note points out, the most basic principle of multilateralism is that matters in the international arena must be dealt with in a fair and just manner. For a small State like Ireland, that means that every State is given an opportunity to have its voice heard and to have its concerns objectively weighed. As an aspiring member of the Security Council for the period 2021-2022, we say that with sincere conviction.

As we commemorate the centenary of the end of First World War, we are very much reminded of the high costs of unilateralism and unchecked nationalism and the wars that it engendered. The ruinous fighting of 100 years ago is the hard evidence of our need to win today's battle for multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and of Singapore, on behalf of Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your country, China, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank you for convening this important debate, which, most importantly, looking at the many countries taking the floor, everyone finds timely.

I have unshakeable belief in the virtue of multilateralism in finding solutions to the challenges facing humankind and in promoting sustainable peace and development. At the heart of the multilateral system is the United Nations — the largest congregation of nation States. It embodies the international community and exemplifies our collective determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The United Nations provides a rules-based platform for dialogue and cooperation, bringing together nations, large and small, on the basis of sovereign equality.

It saddens me to say that multilateralism is now under unprecedented strain. The United Nations is increasingly challenged to respond to ever more complex global challenges — from conflicts in remote parts of the world to climate change, from terrorism to extreme poverty and from weapons of mass destruction to pandemics.

I should mention the lack of progress in resolving the question of Palestine, which is one of the longest-

standing issues on the United Nations agenda. A performance deficit breeds a trust deficit, and signs of a trust deficit towards the United Nations are becoming more prevalent than ever, as seen in the growing recourse to unilateralism and isolationism, countries withdrawing from internationally agreed commitments, trade differences leading to disputes that affect the global economic stability, and the use of coercive measures to achieve national policy objectives. Indeed, some of the world's largest problems today are precisely the result of those kinds of irresponsible actions. Against that backdrop, I would like to make the following points.

First, we all must renew our commitment to multilateralism. No nation, no matter how powerful, can effectively address the global challenges on its own. The United Nations was established to harness our collective efforts, knowing that we would fail if we acted separately. That was true in 1945, and it also remains true now. The world must not be seen as a zero-sum game. Kofi Annan once said:

> "Peace, security and freedom are not finite commodities ... which one State can acquire at another's expense ... [T]he more peace, security and freedom any one State has, the more its neighbours are likely to have." (*A/57/PV.2, p. 1*)

I should make a reference to United Nations peacekeeping, underlined by the Secretary-General as a concrete example of multilateralism at work. As a core business of the Security Council, United Nations peacekeeping was designed to enable us to contribute to peace and security, sharing the responsibility under the United Nations flag. However, the survival of multilateralism ultimately depends on the capacity of the United Nations to adapt to new challenges and to the quality of its response.

My second point is that we must enhance our support for United Nations reform. Stronger multilateralism requires a stronger United Nations. The reform of the United Nations is critical to ensuring that the Organization remains relevant and fit for purpose and that it has an impact on the ground. All those words and jargon must be translated into concrete actions. We are now in the implementation phase of wide-ranging reforms initiated by the Secretary-General. It is also our job to ensure that the process remains inclusive and transparent. The goal of the reform is clear: the United Nations must be better positioned to help countries to sustain peace and development. Only then can we restore the faith of global community in the United Nations.

Much needs to be done to communicate the achievements and positive work being done by this Organization. We must perhaps increasingly harness the power of social media and engage with the wider United Nations stakeholders, bringing their views into our deliberations here, and vice versa. Many have said that we must invest in defending multilateralism. We must also be sure that our investment in the past is not for nothing. A simple test of our desire for multilateralism is to renew our commitment to past agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, as well as to adopting future agreements, such as the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. That is a simple test for us all.

In conclusion, in his opening statement at the recent 2018 annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, held in Bali from 8 to 14 October, referring to the multilateral system, which is under attack, the President of my country, Mr. Joko Widodo, used the metaphor that the world is like the *Game of Thrones* television serial, where the evil winter is coming. I would like to add that if winter really comes, we all will be left in the freezing cold. No one country will survive if we choose unilateralism over multilateralism. We would be frozen in our tracks.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Hattrem (Norway): I deliver this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

The multilateral system is under pressure, as are the norms that underpin it. A rules-based international order is in the interests of all Member States. It brings predictability and creates the conditions for tackling global problems. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement are the results of multilateral cooperation. All such agreements are crucial to addressing global challenges. Climate change, conflict, instability and human rights violations impede global sustainable development.

We must step up our collective efforts to prevent and curb conflicts and wars and build basic social

and economic infrastructure for the whole of society, especially for those in the most vulnerable situations. We must understand and make use of the linkages among human rights, sustainable development and peace and security. It is crucial that we apply a gender perspective in all policy areas and that we engage both women and men.

The consequences of instability affect us all, and global security threats require global responses. The Security Council must be able to act, and so must we as Member States. Terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations represent a truly global threat. That threat requires a global response. The Nordic countries believe that any measures aimed at countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism must be in compliance with the rule of law and human rights.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries encourage the Council to make full use of its mandate to engage in, support and promote mediation efforts, as it did by providing united and clear support for the Colombia peace process. However, mediation is not a quick fix and cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach. Social and economic development remains crucial if we are to address the root causes of conflict.

We recognize that regional organizations are often best placed to take the lead in mediation efforts. We welcome and support the strengthened relationship between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations and between the AU Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an essential multilateral tool that strengthens our ability to trade and interact with the world. We need to defend and reform the WTO. Free trade agreements have contributed to economic growth, the reduction of poverty and falling child mortality rates. The Nordic countries are staunch supporters of rules-based and predictable trade arrangements.

We, the United Nations, must also do our part — and we must do it better. The world needs a stronger, coherent, effective and responsive United Nations, which is why all Member States should continue to back the Secretary-General's reform agenda. We, the Nordic countries, will be consistent partners for a common future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, let me also express our appreciation to the Chinese presidency for convening this debate.

Undoubtedly, we are confronted with a crisis of multilateralism in today's globalized and interdependent world. The alternative to the rules-based order is chaos. Hence our common duty to strengthen the multilateral system through relevant reforms and making multilateral institutions more fit for purpose. The United Nations is at the core of this and, in that context, we welcome the United Nations reforms launched by the Secretary-General, within the three pillars of the Organization.

When we talk about disruption of the rules-based order, the region I come from is no exception. Unfortunately, it was shattered by destructive role of one of the permanent members of the Security Council. This year marks the tenth anniversary since Georgia experienced full-scale military aggression by Russia, which resulted in the illegal occupation of 20 per cent of my country's territory. A few years later, Ukraine also fell victim to the very same aggressor. These blatant violations of fundamental norms and principles of international law, in disregard for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States, was a massive blow to European security and the entire international order.

The Government of Georgia remains firmly committed to pursuing a peaceful conflict resolution policy directed towards the de-occupation of the two Georgian regions, on the one hand, and reconciliation and confidence-building between the communities divided by war and the occupation line, on the other. Yet we are confronted with often asymmetrical challenges countering our peace initiatives.

As we speak, the Russian occupation regime in Tskhinvali continues to fortify the occupation line adjacent to the village of Atotsi, in Kareli municipality, by installing one-kilometre-long artificial barriers. Razor wire fences and other artificial barriers erected along the occupation line have already reached 100 kilometres, dividing families, depriving them of the right to free movement and access to their property, agricultural lands, religious sites and cemeteries, as well as to health care, emergency services and education in their native tongue. I previously informed the Council about abductions, tortures and killings based on ethnic origin that have taken place against the civilian population living along the occupation line. For the past 10 years, the occupying Power has continued its

military build-up, instead of abiding by the agreement it signed — the European Union-mandated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008.

Clearly there is a need for the immediate creation of international security mechanisms on the ground, as well as for unimpeded access of international human rights monitors to the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia. What we see instead is deliberate targeting on the part of Russian of these negotiation formats through undermining the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) established under the Geneva International Discussions. We do not need to emphasize the crucial importance of the Geneva International Discussions and IPRMs — unique negotiation formats to address and resolve security and humanitarian issues experienced by the people affected by the unresolved conflict between Georgia and Russia. The formats have been essential in preventing the large-scale escalation of conflict in the light of increased provocations on the ground.

I would like to recall that the Security Council was actively engaged with Georgia from 1993 to 2009, until the brazen use of the veto power by Russia blocked the prolongation of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). By vetoing its extension when it was needed most — shortly after the August 2008 war — a dangerous precedent in the history of United Nations peacekeeping was created. Being party to the conflict, using its veto power to block the extension of the UNOMIG mandate came in direct contradiction with Chapter V, Article 27 of the Charter of the United Nations. Paragraph 3 clearly stipulates that "a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting".

Misuse of the veto power has resulted in tragic consequences in other parts of the world as well, with a record high numbers of vetoes cast in the past two years. Therefore, we consider it crucial to reform the Security Council — and the United Nations in general — to increase effectiveness in addressing global challenges, be they conflicts, humanitarian and economic crises, forced displacement or climate change. That will enable us to achieve cohesion, inclusivity and the development of societies, with respect for international law and the rules-based order at heart.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Gonzalez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate the delegation of the People's Republic of China on assuming the leadership of the Security Council during the month of November. I would also like to thank them for convening this open debate and for the substantive concep paper they provided us (S/2018/982, annex.)

My delegation believes the holding of this open debate to be most timely. The global challenges we face require the international community to enhance its working methods so that we can become more efficient. In the face of such challenges, we must also consider how to promote all the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations together, without detriment to any of them. I would like to refer to three topics during my statement.

First, I reiterate the importance that Colombia attaches to the purposes and principles of the Organization's Charter. They are not a pointless enumeration of general values and goals; rather, they are the very foundation upon which our Organization is built, enabling States to constantly and collectively strive for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The purposes and principles uphold international law and relations and are as valid today as they have been for seven decades.

The Government of President Duque Márquez firmly believes that, given the increasing number of actors involved in international relations, today's world requires a system of governance that, while giving order to and facilitating the management of international affairs, also helps to consolidate the capacities of States to meet the demands of society and guarantee our common good. The strengthening of multilateral forums promotes a greater degree of symmetry in international relations, contributing to transparency and the development of equitable rules of the game that can be accepted by all. The broad and democratic participation of States in multilateral forums enables us to forge joint commitments and fulfil the obligations that arise from them, thereby strengthening the principle of collective responsibility as a criterion to confront global challenges.

Strengthening multilateralism therefore fosters cooperation and consolidates fairer and more balanced rules of the game. There is nothing more beneficial for the efforts of the international community in its fight against the scourges that burden us than the existence

of commitments entered into democratically by States. These must be developed as a result of dialogue and political consultations and established on balanced criteria that consolidate institutions and strengthen the international order.

The second issue I would like to address is the need for flexibility and adaptation in our Organization. The effective implementation of the three reforms of the United Nations system spearheaded by the Secretary-General will ensure that its management is more modern, transparent and efficient. That also includes achieving gender equality and the promotion of a results-based system so that the Organization can fulfil its mandates expeditiously.

Likewise, protecting and strengthening the Security Council means that it is essential to democratize this collective mechanism. When we speak of a more democratic Council, we refer to a body that is more representative, more transparent and more effective. My delegation, together with the countries of Uniting for Consensus, has presented solid proposals calling for a reform of the Security Council that will attend to those principles by means of an increase in the number of non-permanent seats and establishing a new category for longer-term seats or introducing the possibility of seats that qualify for re-election.

Finally, there is an urgent need to place prevention at the heart of the Organization's activities. Prevention has been identified by the Secretary-General as a priority for making the Organization more effective and for saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Such an approach should lead the Organization to react quickly and in a coordinated manner to produce results on the ground. We believe that, at the current time, strengthening the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, as a result of the repositioning of the development system, can and must play a fundamental role in that regard.

Preventing conflict means strengthening institutions and building resilient societies. It means placing respect for human rights at the heart of national and international policy. It means protecting and empowering women and girls, one of the most important steps in sustainable development. And it means achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I conclude my statement by reiterating my delegation's commitment to an international rules-based order in which the United Nations is at the centre.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I very much support the theme of multilateralism.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank the Chinese presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate in order to reflect on the need to strengthen multilateralism. I also thank the Secretary-General for his statement in that regard.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

In an interdependent and globalized world we can address and resolve global problems only through multilateral means, including dialogue and international cooperation. History shows that a strong multilateral, inclusive and rules-based international order is essential for the maintenance of global peace and security. It must be our joint responsibility to defend and strengthen it.

The United Nations was created because the world had paid too high a price for the absence of a credible and functional international system. It was necessary to put an end to the world where might makes right, where big Powers dominate and dismember their neighbours. Latvia is convinced that only genuine respect for the Charter of the United Nations can prevent the world from plunging into chaos. The relations between States must be exclusively based on law and dialogue, and not on force and coercion.

Since regaining its independence and acceding to the United Nations, in 1991, Latvia has been a strong supporter of multilateralism. Latvia has always been a staunch supporter of international law and a promoter of international principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Those principles are fundamental for maintaining international order based on predictability, stability and the security of States. For us, the United Nations is the core of the multilateral system — the proper place for finding global solutions to global problems.

Current pressing issues — such as conflicts, terrorism, climate change and migration, to name a

few — serve to underscore the relevance and increased interdependence of all three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, human rights and development. They are even more relevant now as the United Nations and its States Members advance the implementation of the bold 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals.

Conflict prevention has its rightful place at the centre of the United Nations agenda. Also, early action by the United Nations in situations of concern is critical. Latvia strongly believes that respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance are key to maintaining peace and security. Therefore, it is important to act early and effectively where serious human rights law and humanitarian law violations take place. They can be an early indication of a descent into conflict or an escalation of conflict.

However, the potential of the United Nations to prevent the outbreak, continuation or resurgence of conflicts has not been used effectively. Far too often, the United Nations has been unable to prevent conflicts, build peace or stop atrocities. Too often resources are spent on responding to and managing crises instead of preventing them. In that regard, Latvia champions the Secretary-General's gender-responsive agenda, including on conventional and light weapons. That is why Latvia has selected gender-based violence as the theme of its presidency of the Arms Trade Treaty.

The Member States of the Security Council have a particular responsibility in maintaining international peace and security. Inaction by the Security Council when mass atrocities are taking place runs counter to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Since permanent members of the Council are granted a special privilege — the veto power — in order to protect the Charter of the United Nations and the international order, they also bear a special responsibility that this power be used in the interests of common peace and security. We also believe that Security Council reform is long overdue. We should all focus on strengthening the legitimacy of this important body.

In order to strengthen the role of the United Nations, serious efforts should be made to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Territorial integrity and sovereignty, as enshrined in the purposes and principles of the Charter, must be respected by all Member States.

At the same time, the United Nations as an Organization must be able to change in order to respond accordingly to twenty-first-century challenges. Latvia supports the reforms of the Secretary-General in order to bring the United Nations closer to the people and be able to respond to their needs for security and well-being. The United Nations can and must be a significant global player, a community of nations proud of its values and committed to multilateralism and the principles of international law.

Multilateral diplomacy can be challenging, but even with differences between Member States great compromises in the form of international agreements have been achieved while putting people and our planet at the centre of what we do. With more unity and collective action, we can strengthen the principles of multilateralism. We all have the obligation to overcome the grim challenges of the present times and to make the world a better place.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Amayo (Kenya): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the People's Republic of China on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. May I also take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for providing us with a detailed concept paper (S/2018/982, annex) to guide this debate. We equally welcome the detailed briefing on the subject provided earlier today by the Secretary-General, the Acting President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the International Court of Justice.

Kenya welcomes this timely debate and is ever-conscious of the fact that its pursuit of foreign policy objectives is guided by certain important principles. Among them are the pursuit of peaceful co-existence with neighbours and other nations, the resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, respect for the equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as well as respect for international norms, customs and laws.

Our common humanity has become a constant element in the modern globalized world. Kenya places great emphasis on cooperation, collaboration and building partnerships in tackling our common challenges and utilizing the available opportunities. That is what the Charter of the United Nations calls upon us to do. We believe that is the essence of multilateralism.

However, the apparent fundamental disconnect between a growing number of global challenges and the current inadequate structures for international problem-solving and decision-making call for a fresh relook at the seven decades of the United Nations existence and what the future holds.

We must ask ourselves why it is that globalization has, to some extent, led to the loss of momentum in multilateralism. Globalization is about the cherished ideal of open markets driving the global economy to achieve unprecedented levels of economic growth and development. It has lifted individual standards of living in many parts of the world and lifted masses up from abject poverty across the world. As a result, many people have experienced newfound political and economic freedoms and many countries have graduated from lower income to higher income within a relatively short span of time. Paradoxically, however, as globalization deepens, multilateralism is retreating. Why? We know that at the individual, societal, national and international levels, both globalization and multilateralism have a tendency towards universality — the former for markets and the latter for governance.

In essence, this means that multilateralism requires sovereign responsiveness and purposeful adaptability to keep up with globalization. Unfortunately, that is the challenge of multilateralism, as many modern States, big and small, rich and poor, remain reluctant to shift away from the pre-nineteenth-century nation-State model of governance, which closely reflects the Treaty of Westphalia. Unless the delicate balance between globalization and multilateralism is restored, change will be upon us. We believe the United Nations should be at the forefront of restoring multilateralism to bridge its gap with globalization. The question is whether the United Nations can stand up to the task of restoring that delicate balance between globalization and multilateralism in order to bequeath peace to future generations. Opportunities to strike that balance abound and are in plain sight.

Some of the most intractable challenges of our time, such as climate change, terrorism, the protection of the oceans and of natural fauna and flora, tackling serious pandemics and the governance of outer space and the cyberdomain, call for concerted multilateral action based on consensus and adherence to international law, not unilateral arrangements. My delegation believes that adherence to international norms and practices developed through mutual consensus should be the guiding light for the restoration of multilateralism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Ms. Simonyan (Armenia): Armenia would like to express its appreciation to the Chinese presidency for convening today's open debate and providing the concept paper (S/2018/982, annex).

The theme of today's meeting is indeed central to addressing the global problems and challenges that require multilateral action. Restoring humanity, sustaining peace and respecting human dignity are important priorities that can be achieved only through concerted efforts and a coordinated response. Systematic violations of human rights, denials of past crimes and impunity, the use of force or economic coercion and a lack of international protection are among the main factors fuelling risks and instability. Tendencies to radicalism and exclusion, as well as a rise in intolerance and hate speech, have been increasingly permeating the international agenda, distorting the global discourse and fostering political and social divides. The conspicuous decline in the international commitment to multilateralism and respect for human rights is particularly troubling at a time when we need more international cooperation and greater capacities for them.

The Secretary-General's recent report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1) demonstrated the need for a stronger commitment to multilateralism as an effective instrument for addressing the multitude of global challenges and disturbing realities facing us. The report is a stark reminder that those challenges cannot be addressed by individual States in isolation. Multilateralism is not only an end in itself but is also essential to achieving our shared objectives of peace and prosperity. Collectively, we should do more to help mitigate crisis situations where basic human rights, including human beings' right to life, are being increasingly challenged. That requires reinforcing our emphasis on the capacity of multilateral institutions to deliver adequate responses.

We support the Secretary-General's efforts to prioritize prevention in the ongoing reform of the United Nations system. Armenia is obliged and determined to contribute to that concept, with a focus on early action in order to prevent grave violations. Our track record is well known. The United Nations resolutions

that Armenia has introduced are aimed at formulating strategies for the prevention of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/323, designating 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime, was a powerful manifestation of responsible multilateralism with a substantive outcome achieved by consensus. This year we are marking the seventieth anniversaries of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in yet another milestone reaffirming our collective determination to fight impunity and prevent any recurrence of human suffering.

Upholding human rights remains a global imperative that is as relevant as ever. Armenia has presented its candidacy to the Human Rights Council in order to recommit to resolute multilateral efforts in the promotion of human rights and dignity. The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms has been at the centre of the fundamental democratic transformation in Armenia manifested in our peaceful velvet revolution. The domestic changes that took place in Armenia in May demonstrated our commitment to decisively embracing policies aimed at promoting inclusion, equal rights and opportunities, development and peace at the national, regional and international levels.

In addressing multilateralism's current challenges, it is important to highlight the centrality of strong collaboration with regional settings, platforms and formats and of working to avoid any duplication of effort. Well-established and internationally mandated formats within regional organizations have the potential and capacity to address complex challenges, especially in situations of conflict. The Charter of the United Nations prescribes the effective utilization of regional arrangements as a pathway to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Armenia welcomes the unwavering and continued support of the United Nations system and the Secretary-General for the mediation efforts aimed at negotiating a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, led by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation and the United States. The ability of the international community to remain consistent in supporting agreements reached within the mandated formats and helping reinforce a mediated solution is critically important to upholding the vision and practice of responsible multilateralism and shared peace.

Multilateral institutions offer platforms where member States, regional organizations and civil society can discuss and agree or disagree on solutions to global problems that no nation acting alone can resolve. Multilateralism provides important avenues for conducting discussions and identifying and broadening areas of potential agreement. Working together is not optional. It is the only way forward, and patient yet resolute engagement in addressing mutual concerns and disagreements therefore remains an important objective to which we are fully committed.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Oman.

Mr. Al Harthy (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your friendly country, the People's Republic of China, on your presidency of the Security Council this month. We are confident that your wisdom and your country's policies will help you to steer the Council's work and achieve the right results.

Today, at the President's initiative, the Council is discussing a subject that is very important to Member States and the international community — the maintenance of international peace and security in a multilateral world. Maintaining international peace and security has always been one of the most important purposes for which the United Nations was established, and the President's initiative is consistent with Member States' growing interest in multilateralism, as also expressed by the Secretary-General and the Acting President of the General Assembly.

There can be no doubt that our many and diverse issues with global impact require global solutions and cooperation on the part of all States, big and small, especially with regard to the importance of reforming the mechanisms of the work of the United Nations and of avoiding double standards in the implementation of justice and international law.

The Sultanate of Oman believes in the United Nations and in multilateralism and joint international action. In our view, they represent the best way to resolve and settle many of the issues facing the international community. We therefore hope to see certain States move away from unilateral measures

that are inconsistent with the principles of the United Nations and international law.

Peace and security demand that we believe in multilateralism, joint work and commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. That is what Member States chose when they founded the Organization, and that is what we should work for and achieve.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Atlassi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of November, and to thank you for organizing this very important debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing on the subject.

In a globalized world that is tested daily and faced with challenges of many kinds, multilateralism is not a choice but a necessity, even an obligation, to work together for the benefit of humankind and the well-being of humans. In the twentieth century, multilateralism became a way to end the ravages of war and anarchy. That is why the founding fathers of the Organization signed the United Nations Charter in San Francisco on 26 June 1945, to save succeeding generations from the horrors of war and poverty, and of disrespect for human dignity and human rights. The aim is to maintain international peace and security, guarantee development and promote human rights. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations were therefore carefully designed to ensure that they would not date and that they would restore human dignity and enshrine the principle of equality among the States Members of the United Nations. Importantly, the link between those principles has been shown over time to confirm the notion of causality. A failure of any one of them has a negative impact on the others.

Multilateralism's raison d'être is now more essential than ever, considering the emerging challenges facing our States. In addition, the proliferation and expansion of terrorism, the growing numbers of conflicts and hotbeds of tension, as well as the expansion of transnational organized crime and its links to international terrorism, along with other challenges, have emerged and have had a major and acute impact on the international scene. Those other challenges include worsening poverty and outbreaks of famine in several regions; unemployment, especially among young people, which has reached alarming levels in various countries, encouraging some of those young people to embrace the fundamentalist tenets of terrorism, radicalism and violent extremism and to become easy prey for transnational crime and trafficking networks; climate change and its impact on the environment and people; increases in natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, the El Niño phenomenon, forest fires and so forth, along with desertification and pollution on land, air and sea. All of those problems should challenge us to act together and foster multilateralism.

There is no shortage of examples that reaffirm the importance of multilateralism and the crucial role played by the United Nations as a fitting venue for uniting us around the principles important to the international community. In that regard, we support the reforms initiated by the Secretary-General aimed at providing the United Nations with better tools for meeting our current challenges. The principles of the Charter must be achieved by taking a comprehensive and multidimensional approach that focuses on the rule of law in all aspects of international relations, including respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for States' sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity, and non-interference in their internal affairs.

In fealty to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Kingdom of Morocco became a member of the Organization on 12 November 1956. Ever since then we have been an active member of the international community and an ardent defender of the purposes and principles of the Charter, which have become the pillars of our foreign policy and international action. Morocco affirms the principles of the Charter of the United Nations relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes, as outlined in Chapter VI, and firmly supports the continued role of the United Nations as a universal Organization responsible for resolving issues related to maintaining international peace and security, promoting human rights and fostering sustainable development.

It is in that spirit that the Kingdom of Morocco, positioning its foreign policy within a framework of preventive diplomacy, encourages the use of dialogue and negotiation in seeking the peaceful settlement of disputes. Constructive and responsible dialogue is essential to that end. Morocco has willingly assisted in efforts aimed at reconciliation and the settlement of disputes, as His Majesty King Mohammed VI did in

the mediation efforts to resolve the crisis in the Mano River region, and in supporting our Malian brothers in dealing with their crisis and our Libyan brothers in getting back on their feet. We hosted the inter-Libyan dialogue held under the auspices of the United Nations that culminated in the signing of the Libyan Political Agreement in Skhirat on 17 December 2015. Beyond that, we want to contribute to building a united Arab Maghreb, a united Arab world and a united Africa.

In addition, in its efforts to resolve crises on our African continent and elsewhere, since 1960 Morocco has been involved in United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security through its participation in peacekeeping operations in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, as well as in NATO and European Union operations mandated by the Security Council. In addition, during its three terms as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, the Kingdom of Morocco has consistently defended the objectives and principles of the Charter and advocated for efficient and effective multilateralism.

Climate change is an extremely important issue for Morocco, which is why in Marrakech in November 2016 we hosted the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Lastly, in Marrakech on 10 and 11 December, the Kingdom of Morocco, continuing its tireless efforts to revitalize and foster multilateralism, will host the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Dang Dinh Quy (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for convening today's open debate on this very important issue. I also thank the Secretary-General for his opening remarks.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Republic of Singapore, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Since the United Nations was founded, history has shown that unilateral and bilateral measures alone cannot solve our global security challenges. On the contrary, multilateral measures, based on the principles of international law enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, have been crucial to addressing them. Nowadays, as peace and security in our world are facing increasing and unprecedentedly complex challenges, old and new, traditional and non-traditional, it is more vital than ever that we uphold multilateralism and make it more effective in addressing these issues, especially the transnational challenges that are beyond the capacity of any Member State to deal with alone, regardless of how powerful it may be. Viet Nam is doing its best to promote multilateralism, and we call on the international community to work together to make it more effective as a means for achieving peace, security and sustainable development. We therefore have the following proposals.

First, all Member States, particularly those with the greatest capabilities, must maintain a strong political commitment to pursuing multilateralism and preserving a rules-based international order that deals with all issues in a fair, just and equal manner, and to taking concrete measures to that end. Secondly, our multilateral mechanisms, and the United Nations above all, must also change, with a view to becoming more effective, transparent and accountable to Member States, and truly relevant to all peoples. In that regard, Viet Nam fully supports the Secretary-General's reform initiatives and stresses how crucial it is that we now set up and implement an appropriate plan of action for realizing those reforms.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Viet Nam's support to the central role of the United Nations in maintaining peace, security and promoting sustainable development, and to reaffirm our strong commitment to fostering multilateralism, with the United Nations at its heart. As an active, responsible and committed member of the international community, Viet Nam will continue to strive for a peaceful, prosperous, sustainable and equitable world.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Chinese presidency for organizing this open debate on the critical issue of strengthening multilateral cooperation for peace and security.

The principles of multilateralism in international relations today are not merely neglected but are being completely ignored. We have forgotten the meaning of mutual trust and respect. Armed conflicts, political

confrontations between the world's greatest Powers, information wars, the undisguised persecution of uncooperative countries, international provocations and sanctions are all vivid proof of that. Doubt has been cast on the fundamental documents of multilateralism in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Our disarmament and non-proliferation regimes are being dismantled, and we have seen recent examples of that in events related to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for Iran's nuclear programme.

Belarus has always adhered to the principles of a peace-loving, non-confrontational policy based on multilateralism and mutual respect. Not only do we participate in the implementation of peace initiatives, we are also active contributors to stability and security in our region. Belarus is the only country in the post-Soviet space that has never been involved either directly or indirectly in active or extended conflicts in the region. We have continued to consistently support the peace process for resolving the conflict in south-eastern Ukraine, making a significant contribution by holding in Minsk the meetings of the Tripartite Contact Group on Ukraine and its working subgroups. We also call for a solution acceptable to all the parties regarding the formulation of parameters for deploying a possible United Nations peacekeeping mission in the region, and we are ready to contribute to the work of such a mission.

The principles of multilateralism also correspond to the idea that Belarus has long promoted for recreating a comprehensive process for resolving relations between East and West analogous to the Helsinki process, based on a new, broad discussion. Our appeals have not gone unnoticed, and only last week in Minsk we held a major international event, a meeting of the Munich Security Conference's Core Group, which brought together leaders of European States, prominent and authoritative political figures, representatives of international organizations and the academic community, and experts. Nowadays the mere possibility of bringing States to the negotiating table is a valuable and important achievement for international peace and security, and we will continue to stick to the principle behind the wise Chinese saying that water wears away stone. In Chinese the phrase goes something like "dripping water will wear a hole in stone". Or, as President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus said at the meeting in Minsk, "Better years of negotiations than one day of war."

Preserving and strengthening multilateralism in international relations, in accordance with the principles of mutual respect and consensus, can give all of us a chance for a future, for geopolitical calm and for peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali associates itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate on the theme "Maintaining international peace and security: strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations", which is certainly a topical one at a time when multilateralism is being seriously questioned. It is also very relevant at a time when the United Nations, which epitomizes multilateralism and which was created in 1945 to save future generations from the scourge of war, has never been so assailed by new challenges and complex threats to international peace and security.

There can be no question that the United Nations embodies the profound aspirations of the nations of the world for peace and security, development and respect for human rights, and that it is therefore the true incarnation of a better future for the peoples we represent here in New York. It is undoubtedly an ideal framework for multilateralism and cooperation among the peoples of the world. Our shared Organization offers every nation represented in it, whether powerful or less powerful, in peace or in crisis, an opportunity to express itself freely and participate on an equal footing in debates and negotiations on the major international issues of the moment. That great achievement in itself underlines the relevance of multilateralism and therefore of the United Nations, in that it fosters mutual trust and understanding, thereby reducing tensions and even conflicts between Member States.

Secondly, in the face of new threats to the world, including terrorism and other forms of organized crime such as trafficking in drugs, arms and migrants, as well as cybercrime and climate change, Mali continues to believe that only a multilateral approach, based

on cooperation between the countries concerned, is capable of sustainably meeting these challenges. It is no exaggeration in that regard to paraphrase the Secretary-General when he says that working together in a multilateral framework is not an option — it is the only answer. No country can achieve its own security by fighting alone, and no country can live in peace at a time when others are mired in instability.

Mali remains a firm advocate of multilateralism and cooperation among nations, with a view to achieving the triad of security, development and respect for human rights. Our country's serious commitment has been manifest in our citizens' participation in processes aimed at reaching political settlements of tensions around the world and the deployment of Malian troops in peacekeeping missions of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and now the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). That same commitment to multilateralism and international solidarity explains why, despite our challenging domestic situation, we continue to send our sons and daughters to peacekeeping operations all over the world. Malians are very proud today to be able to benefit from international solidarity in return, through the presence of military and civilian personnel on our territory from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, the G-5 for the Sahel and a number of other friendly partners working by our side to help Mali restore its authority throughout its territory.

As much as we are committed to multilateralism, we cannot ignore the fact that multilateralism is at a crossroads. We have a collective responsibility to breathe new life into the multilateral framework of the United Nations. To do that, we must commit to addressing international issues in a transparent, equitable and just manner. Ultimately, we must also agree to advance reform of some of the principal organs of the United Nations — in this case, the Security Council and the General Assembly — and including their composition and working methods. We must spare no effort in supporting the various reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General, particularly those concerning the peace and security pillar and the development system. We also know that the United Nations cannot do it all alone, which is why it is important to continue strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. For its part, Mali remains committed to supporting all initiatives aimed at strengthening multilateralism and the primary role of the United Nations in safeguarding future generations from the scourge of war.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Belgium associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union.

Today's open debate on multilateralism is very timely. Given the scope of the challenges we are facing, we want to emphasize more than ever our support for multilateralism and the importance of investing our resources and energy in it. A month ago, in his address to the General Assembly, my Prime Minister delivered a passionate statement encouraging multilateralism, in which he said,

> "Putting human beings at the centre and establishing the rule of law as the basis for international order is what should drive the engine of multilateralism." (*A/73/PV.10, p. 33*)

For centuries Belgium was a battleground for the Powers surrounding it. Thanks to close cooperation among countries and our respect for diversity and mutual dependency, we are now living in the longest period of peace in our history to date. That is why we firmly believe in the usefulness of the United Nations, its Charter and the universal values that inspire it. Belgium supports a constructive and integrated approach to the three pillars of the work of the United Nations — sustainable development, human rights and peace and security — as the best way to prevent conflicts and achieve lasting peace. That belief must now be translated into concrete multilateral action. We must demonstrate that effective and joint steps taken here in the Security Council can make a difference for men, women and children on the ground. That will certainly be the goal of Belgium's mandate on the Security Council over the next two years. Three key words will guide our work.

The first is prevention, which can be achieved by analysing and addressing the root causes and drivers of conflicts in an integrated and comprehensive manner, in close partnership with regional and subregional organizations, the countries most concerned and civil society. The fight against impunity is also a crucial preventive tool. The second is protection, above all

of civilians — men, women and children — with a particular emphasis on children in armed conflict and respect for international humanitarian law. The third is performance, which is about strengthening the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and prioritizing support for political solutions and the protection of civilians.

I would also like to emphasize three areas where we must step up our efforts in supporting a rules-based international order in the area of peace and security. We should all ensure that the international norms that we have all agreed on are consistently respected. All Council members therefore have a responsibility to ensure that their actions in the Council do not contribute directly or indirectly to violations of international humanitarian law, human rights or non-proliferation regimes. In that regard, efforts such as the France-Mexico initiative on the veto and the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group remain extremely relevant. Secondly, we must be able to take advantage of existing multilateral instruments so as to provide concrete solutions to situations on the Council's agenda, and those instruments must in turn reinforce the work of the Security Council. In that respect, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays a very important role in Syria. That is why Belgium has allocated €2 million for building new laboratories so that the OPCW can remain on the cutting edge in its research and verification activities. And the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could play an important and useful role in forging an agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Lastly, if we want to build a rules-based international order, we must also ensure that those rules are truly respected. We have developed important instruments — not only the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, but also a range of instruments for verification and the attribution of responsibility. While there is of course room for improvement where they are concerned, we must also be able to use them when appropriate in order to make multilateralism more effective.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines welcomes this open debate initiated by the Chinese presidency of the Security Council, and aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Singapore on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Our discussion is timely, considering the growing trend towards unilateralism and increasing efforts to discredit multilateralism, mainly, and ironically, by the chief architect of the United Nations. The Philippines supports the Secretary-General's call for a renewed commitment to a rules-based order and a vigorous return to multilateralism, which gives voice to the voiceless, counsels patience until the relevant facts are in, weighs the options for practicality and sustainability and imparts to actions when they are finally taken a credibility often rightly denied to unilateral and, more often than not, impulsive decisions. The ongoing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development manifests one of the main and lasting achievements of collective action. Member States have painstakingly developed national agendas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the environment conducive to peace, stability and progress that we endeavour to nurture can be lost with a single impulsive, unilateral act. Multilateralism is sometimes too slow to act and just as slow to achieve consensus on the most urgent issues. There have been tragic instances when what cried out to be done was not.

As a founding member of the United Nations, the Philippines actively promotes the multilateral process. With regard to economic and social issues, we are coordinating and facilitating issues that really matter to our constituents — migration and development, trafficking, persons with disabilities and biological diversity, as well as human rights. We have been advocating for the global compact on migration, which is anchored in human rights and just plain decency. Concerning peace and security, the Philippines has championed the universal ban on nuclear weapons. We cooperate closely with the United Nations on counter-terrorism. Since 2004 we have also been partnering with Pakistan on an annual General Assembly resolution under the agenda item on a culture of peace.

In the area of maritime cooperation at the regional level, while recognizing differences among States and never compromising our respective core interests, the Philippines has the coordinating role for the next three years on the adoption of a common code of conduct in the South China Sea.

The success that the Philippines has had in countering terrorism has revealed this scourge's transnational nature and confirmed that it is the most pressing threat to peace and security in the world today. The fight against terrorism should therefore unite us all. It demands our total and sincere cooperation.

We firmly believe that reform of the Security Council is integral to strengthening multilateralism, and that developing international norms further and in a balanced manner is critical. However, while the Philippines is strongly supportive of multilateralism, we emphasize that the United Nations and its agencies are a collection of sovereignties. It is not itself a sovereign collective. It is therefore always imperative to ensure first and foremost that the sovereignty of States is respected and upheld. States are always by far the best positioned to solve any problem, and there is no agency or group that can act with anything close to a State's own effectiveness. If a State itself is the problem, that State itself is in the best position to solve it. So let us work with it.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Ms. Yánez Loza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the People's Republic of China, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November, for convening this important open debate on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: Strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations".

Ecuador attaches great importance to the role of the United Nations in maintaining a world order based on respect for international law and the norms and principles established in the founding Charter of the United Nations, which is unquestionably a moral reference point for advancing international peace and security, promoting human dignity and prosperity and defending human rights and the rule of law. We agree with Secretary-General António Guterres that the problems of our time are increasingly global in scope, and that multilateralism is more important and necessary today than ever before.

No State is immune to the threats facing humankind today, but neither will a response come about on its own. For that reason, Ecuador reaffirms its commitment to a multipolar system with the active and collective participation of every country in the world and other relevant actors. Effective governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are fundamental to the maintenance of international peace and security. International law is the backbone of multilateralism, since it enables us to create conditions conducive to maintaining justice and respect for the obligations that States have agreed to on fundamental issues such as sustainable peace, access to justice, gender equality, economic development, judicial independence and the promotion of democracy. There can be no lasting peace without justice and accountability.

In that context, reform of the United Nations represents an opportunity to achieve a strengthened, more united and less fragmented multilateral system. That effort must be accompanied by a political commitment on the part of all of us to achieve consensus, whether on the simplest areas under debate, such as working methods, or on those that require joint decisions by every part of the system, along with the long-awaited reform of the Security Council. The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an example of that, since it was adopted as a common objective of the Member States and the greatest possible effort is needed to achieve it, based on cooperation and above all on an international order that has human beings at its heart and that can enable us to respond effectively to our ever-growing and evolving challenges.

In this context, Ecuador, together with Bolivia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, sponsored a high-level event held on 31 October under the theme of "Renewing the commitment to multilateralism", attended by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and by Bolivia, the President of the Security Council for the month of October. That meeting was an opportunity for us to consider the fundamental role of multilateralism in enabling us to deal with especially urgent challenges. The large number of speakers in the meeting testified to the membership's level of concern about the issue and the importance that it attaches to it.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Ecuador's commitment to multilateralism and how valuable we believe regional and subregional organizations are.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Mayong Onon (Malaysia): I would like to join earlier speakers in thanking China for convening today's open debate.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Singapore on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, the Acting President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the International Court of Justice for their views on today's topic.

Malaysia firmly believes that all Member States must remain united in our collective resolve to uphold and respect the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. As prescribed in the Charter, the United Nations has been and remains at the forefront of various international and multilateral efforts to combat challenges and maintain international peace and security.

In its 72 years of existence, the global multilateral system, underpinned by the United Nations, has paved the way for Member States to make great strides in areas such as multilateral trade, socioeconomic development, poverty eradication, the promotion and protection of human rights, countering terrorism and violent extremism and addressing environmental concerns. However, the evolving nature of the traditional threats and non-traditional security challenges facing the United Nations threatens to undermine many of the gains that have been achieved. Despite various efforts, the United Nations has not been successful in settling some of the longest-standing issues to international peace and security. For example, the struggle of the people of Palestine for their self-determination has remained unresolved for more than seven decades. The longer that Palestinians are denied self-determination, human rights and the rule of law, the more we are all collectively guilty of not fully respecting and upholding the Charter. The Security Council's approach to that issue calls out to us as a tragic of selective inaction in implementing the purposes and principles of the Charter.

[illegible] of reform initiatives with a view to strengthening the United Nations. Although we have recognized the challenges associated with the reform process, we strongly encourage all Member States to work collectively to expedite the process of ensuring that the United Nations remains central to the multilateral architecture. If multilateralism is to be effective, Malaysia believes that only a reformed and strengthened United Nations is the way forward.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): Bangladesh thanks the Chinese presidency for convening today's open debate, and we appreciate the Secretary-General's introductory briefing.

We also align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

During the high-level week of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, we heard a resounding reaffirmation of multilateralism by most of our leaders. In tandem, they made a compelling case for the United Nations as a critical vehicle of multilateralism and underscored the need to make it fit for purpose in the twenty-first century. The word "reform" recurred as a common refrain, with much of the focus on the Security Council itself.

In our world today, multilateralism remains a critical guiding light for a rules based order in the dark tunnels we often find ourselves in. Over the past 70 years, the international community has accustomed itself to a multilateral approach, centred on the United Nations, to addressing most of the pressing challenges of our times. This has been particularly relevant in the context of maintaining international peace and security. The Charter of the United Nations has emerged as the main reference point for the peaceful settlement of disputes and for adhering to a set of internationally agreed norms and principles during armed conflicts. Despite the United Nations limited results in managing conflicts, the Organization has emerged as the most reliable forum in which to raise concerns over the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflicts in any given situation. This has been guided by the values and principles the United Nations stands for, and not merely on the basis of its balance sheets of successes and failures.

With the rapid advancement of science and technology, especially in the domains of information and biological technology, the conventional notion of humanity itself will be subject to new, challenging questions. These questions will continue to require

the collective consideration of all humankind, and not just a select few. We will need global responses to what will be essentially global challenges concerning the world of work, the planetary environment and security in new frontiers. It is critical that such global responses remain mindful of the discontents of those who consider themselves to be left out for one reason or another. Otherwise, there will be a growing temptation to take recourse to protectionism, isolation, intolerance and xenophobia.

Such temptations and strategies can be politically expedient, but cannot be a viable solution for the alleged ailments of globalization. Instead of turning our back on global processes and discourses, it is crucial that we redouble our efforts to address the polarization that is yet again creeping into the multilateral context. The multilateral process can be slow and painstaking, and yet it is worth all the efforts invested in it. There is no reason why globalization and multilateralism should stand in conflict with our sense of patriotism and nationalism, or why they should not draw strength from these to promote the common interest of all peoples around the world.

Anyone who may have doubts about multilateralism should perhaps consider the case of Bangladesh. Thanks largely to multilateralism, a nation born with a war-ravaged economy and dismissed as a basket case has managed to withstand all odds and chart out a pathway for itself as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, lifting more than a million people out of poverty. Multilateralism has always been the mainstay of our foreign policy engagements and remains so on the basis of our sheer national, existential interest. The Sustainable Development Goals reinforce our national aspirations to build a peaceful, just and inclusive society by pursuing the comprehensive pathway to sustaining peace. In the aftermath of the recent episode of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, Bangladesh has had no option but to seek recourse to the United Nations, and particularly the Council, for its custodianship of the crisis until a peaceful and lasting solution can be reached.

Bangladesh will therefore remain an ardent champion of the United Nations, commensurate with our resolve to prepare ourselves for the emerging opportunities and challenges before our world. Our lead contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations is driven by the values we cherish as a nation in support of multilateralism and international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.